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Surpassing All Other Kings

Mesopotamian kingship ideology in the Gilgamesh tradition and the Alexander the Great narratives

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Surpassing All Other Kings: Mesopotamian kingship ideology in the Gilgamesh tradition and the Alexander the Great narratives

By

Dr James Richard Ryan

PhD Classics Research

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Dedication

For Claire

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Abstract

This thesis identifies and elucidates a common engagement with Mesopotamian kingship ideology in the Gilgamesh and the Alexander the Great narrative traditions. As both archetypal monarchs are understood to have ruled as kings in Mesopotamia, this is a much more secure context for comparison. The result of this contextualisation is that the identified parallels are better supported and more clearly understood. Although the study is rendered in comparison, the exegesis of the episodes is not strictly bound by parallels between the traditions. The primary concern is a comparable engagement with Mesopotamian kingship ideology. This enables the thesis to contribute uniquely to the study of each figure's kingship, as well as their comparative dynamic. Mesopotamian kingship was a contest, and our two subject kings represent rivals for the pinnacle in this arena. Therefore, the identification and presentation of a king to surpass all others is argued for both in presented deeds and persevering legends.

Chapter one outlines the premise of the thesis, addresses previous comparisons made in scholarship between the subject kings, and discusses the evidence. Specifically, this is the network of narratives utilised by the study. For the Gilgamesh tradition, these are the Akkadian language manuscripts of the Gilgamesh Epic and the Sumerian Gilgamesh poems concerning the death of Gilgamesh and his campaign against Huwawa. For the Alexander tradition, the study is limited to the Alexander narratives that share a relative geographically congruence with the Gilgamesh narratives. These are the canonical Graeco-Roman Alexander narratives by Diodorus, Curtius, Plutarch, Arrian, and Justin, as well as the Pseudo-Callisthenes narratives, the Syriac Alexander Legend and the Syriac Metric Homily. Chapter two outlines the methodology. Chapter three contextualises Gilgamesh's campaign against Humbaba in Mesopotamian kingly action. Chapter four argues for a comparative understanding of Alexander's siege of Tyre. Chapter five then compares the death of a king in each tradition, and chapter six the subsequent mythical wanderings of our protagonist kings. Chapter seven provides the thesis' conclusion. The overarching themes are the legitimisation of one's kingship and the transfer of power in the Mesopotamian royal tradition.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Outline

This study investigates the Mesopotamian influence upon the Alexander narratives. This is approached through the encoding of Mesopotamian kingship in narrative, as comparative aspects, developments, and parallel functions are elucidated. Specifically, it compares the function and content of parallel episodes in the narratives of Alexander and cuneiform narratives identifiable as the Gilgamesh tradition. This study does not attempt to render definitive readings of the episodes in the narratives, but instead presents a credible contextualisation of episodes within the Gilgamesh tradition that can also be applied to comparable episodes in the Alexander narratives. It should be understood from the outset that it is not direct intertextuality between manuscripts that is detected, but the transmission of ideas and ideals concerned with what it meant to be the king in Mesopotamia. Note that this does not preclude the direct emulation.

The analysis begins with Gilgamesh's campaign against Humbaba and the comparable episode detailing Alexander's siege of Tyre. These episodes are contextualised as campaigns which represent the transfer of hegemonic kingship on earth. The study then advances onto a comparable engagement with the death of the king in each tradition, demonstrating how this ignited the respective mythical wanderings of our protagonist kings. Specifically, these are the deaths of Enkidu and Darius III. Finally, with the structural relationship with the death of the king established and the ideology articulated, I go on to present a recontextualisation of these mythical wanderings in the accession to hegemonic kingship in Mesopotamia. This will all become clearer as the analysis progresses, but it is important to understand from the start that overarching themes concerned with the legitimisation of one's kingship and the transfer of hegemonic royal power in Mesopotamian tradition are intrinsic to the subject episodes in both traditions.

Thus outlined the above is advanced across seven chapters for clarity, reasons of method, and to aid digestion. The present chapter, chapter one, introduces the study and outlines the premise of the thesis. It will briefly address previous comparisons made in scholarship between the subject kings, and presents the network of narratives utilised by the study. Chapter two outlines the methodology. Chapter three contextualises Gilgamesh's campaign against Humbaba in Mesopotamian kingly action. Chapter four argues for a comparative understanding of Alexander's siege of Tyre. Chapter five then compares the death of a king in each tradition, and chapter six deals with the resulting mythical wanderings of our protagonist kings. Chapter seven provides the thesis' conclusion.

1.2 Previous comparisons between the two subject traditions in scholarship

This is not a completely novel connection. The Alexander and Gilgamesh traditions have been paralleled before. These studies have limited themselves to a specific episode concerning the search for immortality in each tradition. The comparison centres on Gilgamesh's journey to Utanapishti and the plant of rejuvenation in tablets IX-XI of the Standard Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (hereafter, *SB Epic*, or simply *Epic*), and Alexander's journey to and encounter with the water of life in the *First Miracle Letter* of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives (ii.23-41). The main proponents of this, Meissner and Henkelman, have each highlighted a series of parallel motifs in topography and mythical encounters in our subject traditions bound by a mutual theme of immortality lost.¹ Meissner concluded that in Gilgamesh he had located the Babylonian model for Alexander's mythical wanderings, whilst Henkelman more cautiously posited an indirect relationship, but an unmistakable parallelism.² This study proves that Meissner's instincts were accurate, but also that Henkelman's caution is understandable. This is because this was not a unique relationship in Mesopotamian kingship tradition. The relationship between Gilgamesh and multiple Mesopotamian monarchs makes the problem a complex one. Having highlighted these studies, I will deal with the previous comparisons in scholarship in more detail in their place in chapter six. However, it is

¹ Meissner 1894; Henkelman 2010.

² Meissner 1894:11-12; 18; Henkelman 2010:354-355.

important to note before moving on that this perceived relationship between our two subject traditions has as yet failed to achieve universal acceptance.³

1.3 Premise

These previously identified parallels provide us with a good reason to embark upon the study in the first place. For it is reasonable to wonder whether further parallels may be identified, and whether the relationship may be better explained than through the study of patterns in hero legends.⁴ Such a departure is not meant to diminish the value of this contextualisation, but instead it endeavours to secure the parallels in a more direct avenue of transmission. Alexander was without doubt presented acting as a Mesopotamian monarch in his narrative tradition. Arrian provides us with a host of conspicuous examples to prove the point when detailing the events in Babylon. Upon entering the city, Alexander is presented taking instruction from the Babylonian priests (Chaldaeans) on his duties toward the temples and the gods as king in Babylon.⁵ This is complemented on his return to the city, shortly before his death, when we are informed that he had ordered and intended upon the restoration of Esagila (conspicuously on its original foundations).⁶ Then there is the detection of the Substitute King Ritual in the Graeco-Roman Alexander narratives.⁷ We are clearly being presented with Alexander, the king of Babylon, in the narrative tradition. This should of course not come as a surprise for a king who progressed to rule a Mesopotamia-centric empire with his royal court at least partly based at the southern Mesopotamian city.⁸

³ For example, see Friedlaender 1910; 1913; Stoneman 1992; 2008:152-154.

⁴ For examples of this contextualisation, see Wolff 1969; Forsyth 1981; Rank 1990; van Nortwick 1996:8-38; West 1997:334ff; Campbell 2008:158-161; Stoneman 1992; Anderson 2012.

⁵ Arrian, *Anab.* iii.16.5; cf. Glassner (2004:no.32; 248-251) for Babylonian ritual instruction of Antiochus (I).

⁶ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.17.1-4; cf. Winter 2000; Roaf 2013:340-341.

⁷ Smelik 1978-1979; cf. Arrian, *Anab.* vii.24.1-3; Plut. *Alex.* 73.3-74.1; Diod. xvii.116.2-4. For the Substitute King Ritual, see Labat 1945-1946; Lambert 1957-58; 1959-1960; Parpola 1983b:xxii-xxxii; Bottero 1992:138-155.

⁸ Weber 2009:90-98; cf. Arrian, *Anab.* vii.19.1-2 for Alexander receiving embassies and congratulations on a successful campaign to the East upon returning to Babylon. Note that Babylon had been the most powerful city in Mesopotamia for nearly three centuries at this point and so would have represented the natural Mesopotamian seat of power (cf. Van De Mieroop 2007:270ff).

All three examples specifically involve an engagement with the Babylonian priestly class. There is a clear indication that what it meant to the king in Mesopotamia was being impressed on Alexander, or at least his narrative tradition. Berossos' *Babyloniaca* in the early Seleucid period would only serve to amplify this transfer of Mesopotamian kingly knowledge to the Macedonians who came to rule in the lands of Sumer and Akkad.⁹ Alexander was the new king in Babylon and was evidently being seamlessly folded into a continuous tradition, a process that is further exemplified by the contemporary cuneiform texts.¹⁰ All of this heavily implies that the identified parallels with the Gilgamesh tradition may be more securely anchored in the presentation of Alexander as king in Mesopotamia. Alexander's position on the *Uruk King List* is particularly suggestive of this, and one has to look no further than the tradition of king lists in Mesopotamia for an indication of how and why the ideology, patterns, and motifs of kingship would transmit to the new 'foreign' occupant of throne.

The tradition of kingship in Sumer and Akkad was inherently one of continuity and transfer from very early on. The *Sumerian King List* (SKL) clearly demonstrates this. Kingship was something bestowed on the earth by the gods.¹¹ When the gods reinstituted kingship on earth after the Flood in the city of Kish, it was the divine right to total rule on earth (or hegemonic kingship) that was bestowed.¹² Ideologically, earthly hegemony was placed on a single city.¹³ This is a complex and sophisticated ideal, as rule in Kish developed to mean both a city-state power base with rights to totality, and a conceptualisation of totality itself.¹⁴ As the conceptual world expanded with the imperial world, microcosms evidently developed.

⁹ Cf. Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:13-91.

¹⁰ E.g. *Uruk King List* (Borger 1974-1977; Grayson 1980-1983:97-98); cf. Grayson 1980-1983:98-100 (Hellenistic King List); van der Spek 2003.

¹¹ SKL, i.1-2; 40-42 (Jacobsen 1939: 70-71; 76-77).

¹² Alternate Mesopotamian restorations of kingship after the Flood should be noted here, specifically *SB Epic*, i.1-8; 37-46 (George 2003:538-541); Berossos, F4a (Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:49-51).

¹³ Cf. *SB Etana Epic*, i.1-30; SKL, ii.16-19 (Jacobsen 1939:80-81; Kinnier Wilson 1985:82-85; Dalley 2000:190-191).

¹⁴ This is best exemplified through the development of the Sumerian royal title, lugal *kiš^{ki}* 'king of Kish' (the city) into the Akkadian royal titular *šar kiššati* 'king of the whole world'; cf. Hallo 1957:21ff; Edzard 1974:147; Maeda 1981; Geller 1987:x; CAD, viii.457-459.

Hegemonic kingship moved from city to city in southern Mesopotamia as political fluctuations occurred presenting a transferrable office, continuous, and conceptually without end.¹⁵ However, this was not restricted to the natives of the competing cities of Sumer and Akkad, as extra-Mesopotamian peoples who came to rule in southern Mesopotamian cities were likewise conceptualised within this tradition of continuity. The Amorites provide an early example of this, and the Persians present an example in proximity to Alexander's own accession.¹⁶ It is therefore reasonable to understand that Alexander entered this group as simply the next iteration. The Hellenistic period king lists support this understanding, as do his presented actions in Babylon in the Graeco-Roman 'histories'.

Just as hegemonic kingship was seen to transfer from one king to the next, and to extra-Mesopotamian conquerors, so did the ideology, patterns, and motifs of tradition. This extends beyond actions in Babylon and Mesopotamia itself to the ideology of universal campaigning.¹⁷ One may then reasonably consider whether the engagement with Mesopotamian kingship was much greater in the narratives than is currently understood, and that more remains to be uncovered. The already postulated parallels between the two kings of Mesopotamia, Gilgamesh and Alexander, suggest that this is the case, and present the king of Uruk as an obvious model for comparison. Yet it is Gilgamesh's position as the archetypal Mesopotamian monarch that forces the comparison. He is the scale upon which Alexander would have been weighed in this context. For Mesopotamian kingship was a contest, and our two subject kings represent rivals for the pinnacle in this arena.¹⁸ Thus the identification and presentation of a king to surpass all others will be evaluated both in presented deeds and persevering legends for our subject kings.

¹⁵ *SKL*, i.40ff (Jacobsen 1939:76-127).

¹⁶ Van De Mieroop 2007:86-90; Kuhrt 2007:71; 73.

¹⁷ Cf. Howe & Mueller 2012:31-34; Strootman 2014b:310-313.

¹⁸ Cf. *SB Epic*, i.29-46 (George 2003:538-541); *Sargon Birth Legend*, 13-32; *Sargon, the Conquering Hero*, iv.120-123; (Westenholz 1997:40-45; 76-77).

1.4 Terminology

It may prove useful to the reader to offer a key to some of the terminology already utilised above and to be deployed below. I have no intention on entering a debate on the use of these terms. In fact, this section is presented in avoidance of that. What follows simply indicates how this terminology is meant in this study, for clarity.

'Mesopotamia' and 'Mesopotamian kingship' are an obvious place to start. Despite 'Mesopotamia' representing a Greek language name for the space it is widely utilised in scholarship on the region. There is no good reason to object to this, and it is certainly easier and less confusing for the reader than fluctuating between evolving terms such as 'Sumer and Akkad', and 'Assyria and Babylonia'. It also specifically serves a purpose as an umbrella term for the region that is particularly useful for a study of this kind. This is because the emphasis here is on continuity in the ideological presentation of hegemony with a nexus in the land between two rivers, hence the designation 'Mesopotamian kingship'. One may choose to identify it as 'Persian kingship' or 'Persian kingship ideology' arguing that it had been fully appropriated by the Persians by the time of Alexander, but this is misleading and plainly inaccurate.¹⁹ One cannot maintain that the ideology wouldn't have been understood as originally Mesopotamian when appropriated by the Alexander tradition.²⁰ An amalgamated 'Perso-Mesopotamian' label is equally unsuitable and undesirable for our purposes as it distinguishes between this kind of kingship and what has come before. It would be as pedantic as labelling it 'Seleucid-Mesopotamian kingship'. The study of this has its place, but it is not here as our concern is the perceived continuity, and an engagement with a long-lived

¹⁹ In support of Persian appropriation, see Arrian (*Anab.* vii.24.3) who attributes the Substitute King Ritual at Babylon to some Persian custom.

²⁰ Berossos provides the simplest avenue for demonstrating this (cf. Kuhrt 1987; Haubold 2013a:127-177). For example, see Josephus, *Against Apion*, i.131-144. Josephus presents a summary of Berossos' account of Nebuchadnezzar II (F9a; Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:57-59). Here Berossos is presented as having corrected things falsely attributed to Semiramis. Josephus concludes here (i.144) by stating that Philostratus agreed with Berossos' account of Nebuchadnezzar when relating the siege of Tyre, and that Megasthenes likewise concurred in his work on India when attempting to prove that Nebuchadnezzar surpassed even Herakles.

Mesopotamian model. We require an overarching term, and therefore 'Mesopotamian kingship' is preferred and maintained.

The next clarification is also one of designation. When addressing narratives such as those by Herodotus, Ctesias, and Berossos, they will be referred to as 'Greek language literature', rather than 'Greek literature'. This is because the latter is also misleading, and implies something that is distinctly and exclusively 'Greek', which they clearly are not. When the subject matter is the deeds and history of Near Eastern kings, the language that the narrative is written in is relevant, but does not fully appropriate the product. It should still be considered as a Near Eastern narrative written in the Greek language unless one concludes that the content is something completely novel created by the author. Likewise, when Alexander is detected acting as king within Mesopotamian monarchic traditions in his narratives, he will be considered as a king of Mesopotamia regardless of the language in which the content is extant. The language represents a characteristic of the narrative, but not ownership of the origins of the content.

Finally, when discussing the content of the narratives in this study, terms such as 'episode', 'theme', and 'motif' will be utilised. Terms such as 'motif' and 'theme' can seem somewhat interchangeable within narrative analysis. However, a way to separate them is to define a 'motif' as something concrete or tangible and 'theme' as something that is abstract.²¹ This is how they will be employed in this study. The word 'motif' will be utilised on the micro scale to discuss recurring elements within parallel episodes. As Thompson defined it, a motif is, 'the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition'.²² On the other hand, the word 'theme' will be employed on the macro scale and utilised to discuss the 'masterplots' of the study.²³ These are the 'the transfer of hegemonic power', 'royal succession', 'divinely harmonious kingship' and 'kingship' itself. 'Episode' is utilised as a way of framing a contained scene within the narratives for discussion. Pertinent examples would be the 'Humbaba episode' in the Gilgamesh tradition, and the 'Siege of Tyre'

²¹ Abbott 2008:88-90.

²² Thompson 1946:415; Lewis 1980:150.

²³ Abbott 2008:42-46.

in the Alexander tradition. To complement this, I will introduce the terminology 'primary episode' and 'secondary episode' denoting a structural relationship where the former serves as a catalyst for the latter. With pertinent terminology thus clarified, all that remains in the current chapter is to present the network of narratives that the study will primarily utilise.

1.5 The network of narratives utilised by the study

The selection of narratives in the Gilgamesh tradition is not solely predicated by an attempt to identify parallels with the Alexander tradition. This is of course a present factor, as the selected episodes afford such a comparison, but a mutual engagement with Mesopotamian kingship ideology is also a primary concern. Therefore, narratives have been chosen for the Gilgamesh tradition that best facilitate a thorough analysis of the subject episodes and their engagement with the ideology. The study may be structured on the parallel episodes, but the analysis is not bound by the comparisons. There was however an attempt to limit the scope in the second of our subject traditions by selecting Alexander narratives that are somewhat congruent with the Gilgamesh narratives, either geographically or through perceived influence.

One cannot cover the Alexander narratives in their entirety, and relative congruence offers a sensible and methodologically rigorous place to draw the line. I am also bound by the previous scholarship, which demands (by results) for certain narratives to be included. The result is a wide net of narratives in which parallels with the Gilgamesh tradition and Mesopotamian kingship ideology have been identified. The scope of the narratives in which parallels have been shown makes the argument unassailable, and presents a prevalent Mesopotamian contextualisation within the Alexander tradition. Despite these results, the selection of narratives is still somewhat arbitrary and should not be preclusive of widening the parameters in subsequent studies. Henkelman has already highlighted

the benefits of a wider net by including the study by Printz in his summary of the scholarship on Gilgamesh-Alexander parallels.²⁴

1.5.1 The Gilgamesh narratives

For the purposes of this study I will primarily utilise the eleven-tablet *SB Epic*. Old Babylonian tablets consistent with the subject episodes are employed for comparison, as well as at times for indications of when aspects of ideology can be first seen within the tradition. It is also pertinent to include the Neo-Sumerian poems detailing the campaign against Huwawa, and Gilgamesh's death in the analysis. These help to provide us with a more complete picture of the episodes within the tradition and enable us to locate the ideology in the presented action of contemporary kings of Mesopotamia. This study does not attempt to deny the obvious variations between the iterations of the episodes, but a consistent ideology will be demonstrated.

1.5.1.1 The Neo-Sumerian Gilgamesh poems

Although the Sumerian Gilgamesh poems mostly survive through later copies, it is clear that they were in circulation as court literature in the Ur III period, plausibly even composed at this time.²⁵ The semi-mythical king of Uruk was a significant figure for the first two kings of the Ur III dynasty, whose extant hymns claim Gilgamesh as a symbolic brother.²⁶ This securely places Gilgamesh in a politico-ideological position with regards to the presentation of kingship during this period. The Sumerian poems of particular interest here are the two recensions detailing the campaign against Huwawa, *GH A* and *GH B*, and the poem known as the *Death of Bilgames (DG)*.²⁷ The Huwawa poems inform our understanding of the campaign against Humbaba in the *Epic*, whilst *DG* is instructive for the analysis of the death of

²⁴ Printz 1931; Henkelman 2010:339-341.

²⁵ Cavigneaux 1993:101-103; George 2003:7. The Ur III period fragment from Nippur is from the *Bilgames and the Bull from Heaven* poem; cf. Michalowski (2003:198-199) for the identification of Peshtur (Gilgamesh's supposed sister in *GH A*) with a princess in the Ur III period court.

²⁶ For example, see Klein 1976. For the possibility of a historical Gilgamesh dating to c.2700-2500 BCE, see Edzard 1959; Tigay 1982:13-16; George 2003:71-90; 101-119; cf. Michalowski 2003.

²⁷ For a critical edition of *GH A*, see Edzard 1991; cf. George 1999:149-161; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:343-352; Fleming & Milstein 2010:182-195; for a critical edition of *GH B*, see Edzard 1993; cf. George 1999:161-166; Fleming & Milstein 2010:196-205; for critical edition of *DG*, see Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000; cf. George 1999:195-208.

Enkidu and the death of the king more generally. It should be noted that the vast majority of extant tablets for the Sumerian Gilgamesh poems come from eighteenth-century BCE scribal exercises locating them in the same time and space as the OB Gilgamesh tablets written in Akkadian.²⁸

1.5.1.2 The *OB Epic*

These OB tablets currently represent the earliest extant evidence for a connected *Epic*.²⁹ The eleven OB fragments of the *Epic* range from school to library tablets. Two of these library tablets are of particular interest. These are the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets, also known as OB II-III. These two tablets have text on both the obverse and reverse with three columns on each side. They are consecutive and form part of a series. The Penn tablet bears a colophon that gives us the name of this version of the *Epic*, as *'šūtur eli šarrī'*, or 'surpassing all kings'. This corresponds to line 29 of the first tablet of the *SB Epic*. Therefore, it is likely that this version of the *Epic* began at this point. This indicates that the first 28 lines of the *SB Epic* are part of a variant recension, possibly of a much later date.³⁰ The Penn tablet details the dreams of Gilgamesh foretelling the coming of Enkidu, Enkidu's taming and arrival in Uruk, and the wrestling match on the streets of Uruk between the two protagonists.³¹ The Yale tablet continues with the establishment of Enkidu and Gilgamesh's friendship, the proposal to journey to the Cedar Forest against Huwawa, and the preparations and departure of the two heroes.³² The significance of these two tablets lies in that so much consecutive narrative from scenes that could be seen as separate episodes, such as the taming of Enkidu and preparations

²⁸ George 2003:7-17; Tigay 1982:23-38.

²⁹ Tigay 1982:39. For detailed discussions and the texts of the Old Babylonian fragments, see George (2003:22-24; 159-286) & Tigay (1982:39-54).

³⁰ See Wiseman (1975:158) who attributes this observation to a note made by A. Shaffer; George (2003:160-161) identifies these tablets as southern Babylonian due to spelling conventions evident, and due to a lack of archival documents in southern Babylonia during the OB period after the eighteenth century BCE posits this as the latest date for them.; cf. Sasson (2012) for a discussion of the differing prologues to the *Epic* (including the MB period and the Hittite).

³¹ George 2003:166-192.

³² George 2003:192-216.

for the journey to the Cedar Forest. Therefore, by this period, we can be confident that we are dealing with a composite narrative and not just connected legends.³³

1.5.1.3 The *SB Epic*

At sometime towards the end of the Second Millennium BCE we see the standardization of the *Epic* culminating in the relatively consistent eleven plus one tablet format that is most familiar to us, entitled '*ša naqba īmuru*', or 'He who saw the Deep'.³⁴ It is this *SB Epic* narrative that we recognise as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, and earlier recensions of the *Epic* are confirmed through their association and similarities with this narrative. However, it is not without its problems. For example, George estimates that we are still currently missing approximately twenty percent of the *Epic* and although the SB narrative is more fixed and consistent, different recensions are evident. This is demonstrated most clearly by the earlier break from Tablet IV to Tablet V in the Ninevite recension, as compared to the Late Babylonian.³⁵ Despite these difficulties, we can recognise a related narrative in the SB manuscripts from the First Millennium BCE, with recognisable divisions. Therefore, it is from this familiar structure that discussion of the narrative is launched.³⁶

The *SB Epic* is attested in the Neo-Assyrian libraries at Nineveh, with some colophons labelled as property of the palace of Assurbanipal.³⁷ It is pertinent that the *Epic* continued to be copied during this period, the significance of which will be

³³ Fleming & Milstein (2010) have argued for diversity between the Pennsylvania and Yale tablets, such as the origin and nature of Enkidu (2010:10-14). This implies variant recensions, but does not change the perception that we have moved beyond separate poems to a composite narrative.

³⁴ George 2003:28-33. This change of name is reflective of the opening words in the SB version (as opposed to the OB version on OB II and III). Tablet XII, which survives in seven manuscripts is almost certainly extraneous to the *Epic*. Primarily, its narrative seems out of place, as we are once again briefly presented with a living Enkidu, whilst Gilgamesh's return to Uruk and acceptance of his lot in Tablet XI seems to draw the *Epic* to a natural conclusion. Furthermore, Tablet XII appears to be a direct translation of the Sumerian poem *Bilgames and the Netherworld*, whereas the rest of the *Epic* incorporates some motifs and episodes of the Sumerian poems, but are not direct translations (George 2003:47-54; 415-417; 528-530). Despite these observations, it is important to remember that Tablet XII was appended to *Epic*, and so forms part of it as it was perceived at least in some circles during the First Millennium BCE.

³⁵ George 2003:418-431.

³⁶ George's (2003:535-725) critical edition collated all known tablets of the *SB Epic* at the point of publication. To this some subsequent discoveries must be added (George 2007b; Al-Rawi & George 2014; Jimenez 2014), but George's 2003 edition remains the main point of reference.

³⁷ Cf. George 2003:736-738.

elucidated in chapter three. As highlighted above, tablets also survive in the Neo-Babylonian script and of the Late Babylonian period. An extremely significant colophon for this study securely places a Gilgamesh tablet (MS f) during the Seleucid co-regency of Seleucus and Antiochus (c.292-281 BCE).³⁸ Thus the traditions are seen to collide chronologically and spatially, presenting the circumstances for influence as knowledge of the *Epic* in Mesopotamia continued into the period of the Successors.³⁹

1.5.2 The Alexander narratives

The connection between this period and the Alexander narratives rests in their subject matter, the hegemonic king in the late fourth-century BCE, and the understanding that the extant Alexander narratives exhibit the influence of early Hellenistic sources. There are often considered to be two main philological branches for the narratives of Alexander. One branch can be termed the 'historical' tradition, whilst the other falls under the umbrella of the 'Alexander Romance'. Both terms are problematic and the separation is somewhat artificial, especially for a study such as this.⁴⁰ Therefore, the narratives will be referred under the umbrella term 'the Alexander narratives' and are considered to form part of the 'Alexander tradition'. This study will serve to further demonstrate their commonality and interrelation. Through the course of the following discussion I will make use of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, the *Syriac Alexander Legend* and the *Syriac Metric Homily*, and the Graeco-Roman 'histories'. The relevance and relative congruence of these narratives to those of the Gilgamesh tradition will become clearer in what follows.

³⁸ George 2003:740.

³⁹ Note that this is not the latest datable tablet. MS b dates to the second half of the second century BCE during the Parthian period in Mesopotamia (George 2003:740b). It is conspicuous that both MSS (b and f) render tablet X, Gilgamesh crossing to Utanapishti. This will be returned to below.

⁴⁰ Cf. Ausfeld 1907:218-231; Pfister 1913a:40-42; Haight 1955:1-5 & 31-47; Merkelbach 1977:20-47; Baynham 1995; 2000; Bosworth 1988b:157-184; 2000; Jouanno 2002:127-190; Xydopoulos 2007.

1.5.2.1 The *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives

The *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives have previously been shown in scholarship to exhibit parallels with aspects of the Gilgamesh tradition.⁴¹ They are also universally located in the ancient Near East and considered to contain content that originates in the Hellenistic period.⁴² Therefore, they constitute an integral part of our network of narratives for the Alexander tradition. This designation, *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, encompasses a multifarious set of narratives, prone to mutation. Yet they are clearly related to each other and can be recognised through a common general progression.⁴³ The three-book division is not universal to the narratives, although it does exist in the earliest surviving Greek manuscript.⁴⁴ The chapter divisions utilised in scholarship were defined by Muller, but it should be noted that they are also not universally applicable.⁴⁵ These are however invaluable for discussion of the narrative, and so variances and their source recensions must simply be noted.

There are currently six identified Greek language recensions. These are *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*, *delta*, *epsilon*, and *lambda*. *Alpha* is unattested, representing the hypothetical narrative from which all the others are thought to derive. A *terminus ante quem* for this Ur-text is provided by the Latin translation of a *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narrative by Julius Valerius in the early fourth century CE. Therefore, c.300 CE is as early a date as can be securely prescribed for the series.⁴⁶ Despite the interrelation of these narratives, it should be emphasised that these consistencies in structure and content that denote a common source and philological tree do not create an island. These narratives clearly interact with a range of sources and

⁴¹ Meissner 1894; Henkelman 2010.

⁴² Cf. Merkelbach 1977; Stoneman 1992; 2008; Jouanno 2002.

⁴³ For rough outlines of *Pseudo-Callisthenes* progression, see Kratz (1991:xiii-xiv); Stoneman (1991:5-7); Doufiker-Aerts (2010:18-19).

⁴⁴ Kroll 1926; the manuscript is known Codex A (11th-12th century CE). Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris (Paris. Grec. 1711). The text is highly corrupted, but renders what is known as the 'A-text'.

⁴⁵ Muller (1846) utilised three codices from Paris, labelled A (Paris. Grec. 1711), B (Paris. Grec. 1685), and C (Paris. Grec. Suppl. 113), which represent the A-text, beta, and gamma respectively.

⁴⁶ Followed by Kroll 1926:xv; Merkelbach 1977:59 & 182. However, the Egyptian character has led some to posit an early Ptolemaic date (Ausfeld 1907; Pfister 1913a; Stoneman 1991; 1992 & 2008).

narratives and should be evaluated beyond the confines of a basic philological demarcation.⁴⁷

A rough sketch of their perceived connectivity is as follows. The MS known as the *A-text* is perceived to be the closest to *alpha* (although not representative of the recension). This is mainly due to its accuracy on Egyptian details, specifically in book one. This has led to the hypothesis that *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (i.e. *alpha*) was originally composed by an author in or very familiar with Alexandria.⁴⁸ *Beta* presents a narrative less Egyptian in character than the *A-text*. This paired with the use of the Roman dating system for Alexander's birth and death has caused it to be located in the Eastern Roman Empire, possibly Byzantium. The understanding being that *beta* presents a narrative more Roman in character with a clear suppression of the *alpha* recension's Egyptian character. It is important to understand here that the perceived reliance is upon *alpha*, not the *A-text*. It is the *alpha* recension that is understood to be the source of the other recensions. The *A-text* is a manuscript with no discernible impact on any of the variant recensions. The *terminus post quem* for *beta* is dictated by the underlying *alpha* (c.300 CE), whilst the *terminus ante quem* is more securely provided by its perceived influence on the Armenian translation.⁴⁹ The Armenian translation exhibits the influence of both *alpha* and *beta*, and is dated to the fifth century CE, due to parallels with the history of Moses of Khoren.⁵⁰

Delta is a distinct variant on *alpha* independent from the *beta* branch. It has not survived in any Greek manuscript, but is attested by the 'oriental' *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives. For the purposes of this study it will be represented by the *Syriac Pseudo-Callisthenes*.⁵¹ It is impossible to determine exactly when *delta* was composed, but the Syriac translation gives it a *terminus ante quem* of the seventh

⁴⁷ Cf. Merkelbach 1977; Stoneman 2008; Anderson 2012.

⁴⁸ Stoneman 1992; Jouanno 2002:57-125.

⁴⁹ Bergson 1965; Stoneman 2007; 2012; Jouanno 2002:247-303. It should be noted that the *lambda* is viewed as an expansion of *beta* (van Thiel 1959; Jouanno 2002:305-338), as is the MS known as the *L text* (van Thiel 1974; Stoneman 1991; Dowden 1989; Jouanno 2002:271-303).

⁵⁰ Wolohojian 1969:8-14; Jouanno 2002:249-250.

⁵¹ Budge 1889. *Delta* includes a visit to the emperor of China, Aristotle's advice against the building of Alexandria, and Roxane's reverence of a portrait of Alexander.

century CE with a date for the Greek text potentially being considerably earlier.⁵² *Epsilon* survives from a sole thirteenth century manuscript, but provides accurate Egyptian information that is absent in the *A-text*, *beta*, and *delta*, leading to the hypothesis of an independent connection to *alpha*. Its utilisation of the Pseudo-Methodius *Apocalypse* appears to provide a *terminus post quem* of the late seventh to early eighth century CE.⁵³ Finally, there is *gamma*, which is of unknown date, but is often ascribed to the eighth century CE. It is perceived to combine *beta* and *epsilon*, as well as other material. It also contains recognisably Jewish and Christian characteristics that have led to an author of one of these faiths being hypothesised. *Gamma* is by far the largest and fullest *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narrative.⁵⁴

1.5.2.2 The *Syriac Metric Homily* and *Syriac Alexander Legend*

Pseudo-Callisthenes exhibits parallelism with two pertinent Syriac narratives. The significance of the *Syriac Metric Homily* and the *Syriac Alexander Legend* to the comparison of the Alexander and Gilgamesh traditions has also already been demonstrated by Meissner and Henkelman.⁵⁵ These narratives exhibit pronounced and complex parallels with the *Epic* and so are indispensable for the comparison of our protagonists' mythical wanderings. They will form a critical part of the argument in chapter six. Both narratives date to the seventh-century CE. The *SyrLeg* is imbued with Byzantine propaganda and ideology, and the *SyrHom* is understood have been composed afterwards and in response.⁵⁶ Both narrate Alexander's advance towards the ends of the earth and the Land of Darkness, as indicated familiar from his mythical wanderings in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*.

⁵² See Noldeke (1890:11-17) and van Bladel (2007) for the identification of a lost Pahlavi intermediary between the Greek *delta* and the *Syriac*; cf. Ciancaglini 2001.

⁵³ Trunpf 1974; Jouanno 2002:339-440; Stoneman 2008:231. Codex Q (Oxonius Bodleianus Baroccianus 17. An example of these additional Egyptian details is the accurate pharonic attire of Sesonchosis. For the Pseudo-Methodius text see Budge 1889.

⁵⁴ Lauenstein 1962; Engelmann 1963; Parthe 1969; van Bekkum 1992:13-14; Jouanno 2002:441-462; Stoneman 2007; 2008:231-232; 2012 & forthcoming.

⁵⁵ Meissner 1894; Henkelman 2010; for the *Syriac Alexander Legend* and for the *Syriac Metric Homily*, see Budge 1889:144-158; 163-200.

⁵⁶ Reinink 2002; 2003; Van Bladel 2007:57

1.5.2.3 The Graeco-Roman 'histories'

Finally, there are the Graeco-Roman 'histories'. Diodorus, a native of Sicily, wrote a universal history in Greek during the second half of the first century BCE. Book XVII of this history deals with Alexander and has been understood to rely heavily upon Cleitarchus.⁵⁷ Justin's account is an epitome of the universal history of Pompeius Trogus, both were written in Latin. Similarities between Justin's account and those of Diodorus and Curtius have led to the perception of a common source in Cleitarchus. Trogus is understood to be a third generation Roman citizen of Gallic descent from the Augustan period, whereas little is known of Justin dated variously between the second and fourth centuries CE. Recent studies into the language of the *epitome* have attempted to distinguish between the input of Trogus and Justin, whilst through the peculiarities of vocabulary utilised they have argued for a second century CE date for Justin.⁵⁸

Plutarch's *Life of Alexander* forms part of a major work by the author on the parallel lives of the great Greeks and Romans. Alexander is paired with Julius Caesar and the work takes the form of a biography. Plutarch mentions more than twenty four sources, including Cleitarchus, Ptolemy, Aristobulus, Chares, Onesicritus, Callisthenes, and the *Ephemerides*.⁵⁹ Plutarch himself was born in Chaeroneia in the mid-first century CE, and most likely composed his *parallel lives* towards the end of this century and the beginning of the next.⁶⁰ Arrian was born in Nicomedia, Bithynia in the late first century CE. He wrote a history of Alexander entitled *Anabasis Alexandri*, which is dated to the second century CE.⁶¹ Arrian claims to have primarily followed two sources, Ptolemy and Aristobulus, although he admits to making use of other sources.⁶² These other sources cannot be identified with any certainty, but

⁵⁷ Sanders 1981; Hamilton 1977; Hammond 1983:12-85. It should be noted that nowhere in book xvii is Cleitarchus named as a source. Additionally, Hammond argues for Diyllus of Athens as a second major source for Diodorus' book xvii.

⁵⁸ Steele 1917; Hammond 1983:86-115; Syme 1988; Yardley & Develin 1994:2-10; Yardley & Heckel 1997; Yardley 2003.

⁵⁹ Hamilton 1969:xlx-lxii; Hammond 1993:5-187.

⁶⁰ Hamilton 1969:xiii-xxvii.

⁶¹ Bosworth 1980:1-16.

⁶² Arrian, *Anab.* I.pref.1-3

have been argued to contain the writings of Cleitarchus, Callisthenes, Onesicritus, and Chares.⁶³

Finally, we come to the history of Alexander written in Latin by Curtius.

Unfortunately, we cannot be sure of its exact date and know virtually nothing about its author. This is partly due to the loss of the first two books of his history, which precludes positive conclusions about the aims or date of the narrative.

Nevertheless, it is probable that Curtius' narrative dates from sometime in the first two centuries CE.⁶⁴ As noted above, similarities between the account of Curtius and those of Diodorus and Justin indicate a common source, which is considered to be Cleitarchus. However, his account is a rich source of material not found elsewhere and he appears to also have utilised the accounts of Aristobulus, Chares, Ptolemy and Onesicritus, among others.⁶⁵

Although the 'historical' narratives of Alexander written by Diodorus, Curtius, Justin, Plutarch and Arrian all come from the Roman period, it is their understood reliance upon the 'lost histories' of the Hellenistic period that provides them with their perceived authority.⁶⁶ More securely, it is this connection that provides the 'histories' with their relative congruence with the Gilgamesh tradition. They are well placed to exhibit traces of a Mesopotamian contextualisation present in the Alexander narratives of the Hellenistic period. They are also perfectly placed to impact upon the subsequent *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives. Therefore, they are integral to the study and evaluation of parallels between the two traditions, as well as being critical for a thorough exegesis of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives.

1.5.3 A point of method

Thus we have our network of narratives through which the study will be advanced. This selection includes narratives across six ancient languages. It is important to note here that I am not proficient in all of them. There is an equal split of narratives

⁶³ Hammond 1993:189-333.

⁶⁴ Baynham (1998:201-219) makes a detailed summary of the debate, attempting to narrow the date bracket on historical grounds. She finally settles upon the reign of Vespasian, but this cannot be asserted with any confidence, and so it is necessary for now to consider the wider bracket.

⁶⁵ Hammond 1983:116-159; Baynham 1998:57-100.

⁶⁶ Cf. Pearson 1960.

consulted in their original languages and those solely in translation. This is self-evident in the study through the quotations provided. The split is Armenian, Syriac, and Sumerian in translation only, whilst the Greek, Latin, and Akkadian have been consulted in their original language. I have made efforts to confirm the Sumerian at key points and this is referenced. Although this is not ideal, it is idealism itself to demand a scholar with proficiency in all six languages, and also an interest in the relationship between Alexander and Gilgamesh. Such rigours also approach a nihilist view of translations. However, it should be noted that at no point does the argument wholly rest on a narrative consulted solely in translation. With this stated, further aspects of method will be elucidated in what follows in chapter two.

Chapter Two

Methodology

2.1 The general methodological approach

The general methodological approach to this study is one of demarcation ahead of comparison. The Gilgamesh tradition's engagement with Mesopotamian kingship ideology will be rendered independently of any discussion of Alexander. This is because the Alexander tradition cannot be said to prove anything for the Gilgamesh narratives beyond continuity of the identified ideology. The reverse is evidently not true and this study will secure that in evidence. Therefore, I will present the exegesis of the subject episodes in the Gilgamesh tradition first, and then progress onto a comparable reading of the Alexander narratives. This will help ensure that the reading of the Alexander narratives does not corrupt our understanding of the Gilgamesh narratives. This is strictly adhered to in this study hence the separation of the argument for continuity in the institutionalised narrative structure for the death of the king, outlined in chapter five, being presented in an appendix (B). It is methodologically critical that the Gilgamesh tradition be strictly expounded in contemporary material firmly located in its source cultures and periods for the argument to be meaningful.

Exactly how this will be done requires some further clarification here too. Those Gilgamesh narratives outlined in the introduction span a period of approximately two millennia (i.e. Ur III period to Parthian Babylon). It is not possible in a study of this size to engage with and expound the relationship to kingship in each and every period (this will be territory left for subsequent studies). It is not actually necessary to do so either. The approach has been to connect the detected Mesopotamian royal ideology in the Neo-Sumerian Gilgamesh narratives with 'real' royal action in the Neo-Sumerian period. This demonstrates its relevance and how it would have been contextualised when it is first evident in the tradition. Some discussion of how this is maintained through to the OB period is offered, but the tradition itself is seen as an avenue of transmission. It is then necessary to articulate the ideologically

imbued tradition's continued relevance into the First Millennium BCE. This is achieved by demonstrating its parallelism and influence upon genuine royal action in the Neo-Assyrian period (more specifically, the Sargonid period). Neo-Babylonian parallels are also offered in support of the reading. This securely places the tradition as a relevant and continuing source model for kingship ideology in Mesopotamia to a point that can be confidently connected to Alexander and his Successors' hegemony in Mesopotamia, thus making the contextualisation of the Alexander narratives both secure and meaningful.

As the study advances it will become clearer that what is perceived is the transfer of ideas and ideals of kingship to the new king on the Mesopotamian throne. The specifics of transmission or narrative infection are discussed in turn once the parallels have been elucidated, but one should be clear that it is not understood to be the work of isolated scholars, with dusty tablets, in dark corners of marginalised temples. This is an inaccurate view of the engagement in the immediate period, something that is articulated by both the Alexander narratives and the early Seleucid period sources (see chapter one). Despite occupying this position, the parallels are rendered between the surface materials of extant narratives in each tradition, and so some consideration must be given to a method for evaluating and quantifying these comparable literatures.

2.2 A method for the evaluation of parallels

When attempting to discuss parallels between what initially appear to be distinct literatures, one is beset with complications and objections. It is right to question what constitutes a relationship. How many and of what nature must similarities be for them to be meaningful, and to what degree are differences fatal to these comparative arguments. Further, it is necessary to question how and why such a relationship developed, if that is the conclusion reached. The answer to the second of these two questions has already been offered and will be constantly articulated as the parallels are rendered. The relationship here is perceived to exist between two archetypal kings who ruled from the same space. Alexander mirrors Gilgamesh, because Gilgamesh offers the model for kingship in Mesopotamia. We are simply

looking at two iterations of the same job. The reasons such efforts were made can be understood through ideals of continuity and a melding of cultures, infecting Alexander's narrative tradition as a sort of 'intentional history' is seen to have a lasting impact.⁶⁷ A rigorous way of solving some of the problems posed by the first question can be as follows.

The problem of what constitutes 'literary borrowing' and how it can be identified has been approached previously elsewhere.⁶⁸ A comparative method has been employed in Biblical Studies. Here Near Eastern narratives extraneous to the bible have been compared with those in the bible, searching for signs of influence or interaction. An example of this method can be seen in arguments for similarities between Mesopotamian creation and flood narratives and the biblical book of *Genesis*.⁶⁹ This seems to be an obvious approach due to the bible's original existence as Near Eastern narrative, the geographical congruence of the narratives, and the considerable contact between the producing cultures.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the idea of a relationship of influence has met with opposition in scholarship.⁷¹ The focus of the debate may be viewed as a polarization between similarities and

⁶⁷ Gehrke has argued for the interweaving of myth, ideology, and history in the ancient world to complement geo-political alignments, and to fulfil the socio-cultural requirements of given groups. Through this action of 'intentional history' a group defines and positions itself within its environment. History, mythology and ideology are then seen to co-exist in narratives helping to define and cement a group's position in the world, and to meld evolving relationships (Gehrke 2001; 2010; cf. Foxhall, Gehrke & Luraghi 2010). Understanding this functionality of history is central to the current study. It is not necessarily the 'real events' history that is of interest, but how historical action is encoded in literature to define and coalesce the new socio-political and cultural reality after Alexander's invasion. Thus Alexander, the new Mesopotamian monarch, is seen to be presented in evolving Mesopotamian terms with regards to position, power and kingship ideology.

⁶⁸ N.B. I have used the term 'literary borrowing' as the comparison is drawn between the extant literary narratives. The use of the term here does not imply any direct contact between texts, hence the 'scare-quotes'.

⁶⁹ Heide 1963:129; Speiser 1964:9-10; Lambert 1965:291-292; Kapelrud 1974; Jacobsen 1981; Walton 1981; Kikawada 1983; Tigay 1993.

⁷⁰ Kuhrt 1995:417-472; 590-597; Van De Mieroop 2007:210ff. The Exilic period (*Jeremiah* XXV:9-12; LII) is particularly interesting, as it places Jewish communities in Babylon where direct influence seems to have taken place on production of parts of the bible, for example, see Walton 2002; Paul 2002; Van Der Toorn 2002; Rindge 2010; Stokl & Waerzeggers 2015.

⁷¹ Sandmel (1962:1-13) pejoratively labelled the practice in scholarship of over emphasising similarities between separate traditions to posit a relationship of influence 'parallelomania'; Lambert (1965) has been referenced in both camps, as he is critical of the comparisons and claims of influence between Babylonian narratives and *Genesis*, but concedes that indirect influence probably occurred in the oral sphere during the Amarna period; Millard (1967:17) rejects that even an indirect relationship has been established due to differences between the biblical and Babylonian traditions in both content, and religious and ethical character.

differences. Those arguing against borrowing focus upon the evident variations, and those arguing for borrowing highlight the conspicuous similarities.⁷²

In the light of such debates, it is pertinent to establish criteria for evaluating the value of the comparison when tallying the similarities. A useful conclusion is that the parallels must constitute a complex pattern that cannot be otherwise explained.⁷³ In part this means that if the parallel is present, in its full complexity, in the Greek language literature prior to Alexander's expedition (for example in the works of Homer or Herodotus), then the simplest conclusion may be the most likely. This is that the source of its repetition in the Alexander narratives may be solely the Greek language antecedent.⁷⁴ Yet one must be cautious here, as this is a two-edged sword. Firstly, it must be 'in its full complexity' otherwise what is detected is a comparable engagement, but not the source narrative/tradition. Further, even if the pattern were to be found in preceding Greek language literature, but was specifically attached to a Mesopotamian figure, the Greek language antecedent would simply represent an easily reconcilable avenue of transmission, and a plausible case for arguing pre-exposure to the contextualisation. The context and content would still be understood as quintessentially Mesopotamian (or more generally, Near Eastern), and therefore the perceived ideological engagement would be maintained, even if the direct relationship with the Gilgamesh tradition could not be sustained.

These are significant points for the current study, but for them to be meaningful it is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by a 'complex pattern'. Firstly, it means that a random isolated detail is not sufficient to sustain or posit a parallel, no matter how compelling it may appear. In addition to this, a 'complex pattern' should not be viewed as simply restricted to a string of motifs, but also connected

⁷² The above summary of the comparative method at work in Biblical Studies is rendered much more fully by Tigay (1993:250-253), nevertheless, it was necessary to repeat his work somewhat as it informs the current project. Lambert's study (1965) also provides a detailed summary of the early scholarly debate on the topic.

⁷³ Wellek & Warren 1956:258; Albright 1957:67; Tigay 1993:251.

⁷⁴ N.B. I have deliberately drawn the line prior to Alexander's expedition, as although examples may be identified post-Alexander, but pre-dating the extant Alexander narratives, it is entirely possible that after the conquest, Alexander was the host that enabled the introduction of the tale type. Therefore, in this case the previously stated position would be both precarious and arbitrary.

through character and function. The parallels have to be relevant and share characteristics of meaning. It is exactly this 'complex pattern', currently unique to the two protagonists, that forces the comparison between the subject traditions. The parallels, in their full complexity, do not survive in any other tradition. Yet again caution is advised. It does appear to be a largely common ideological engagement in Mesopotamian kingship (as this study will indicate). It is likely that many comparable narratives existed for parallel figures. Therefore, one must carefully consider and evaluate how direct the relationship can be seen to be. This will be expanded upon over the course of the study, but for now it must simply be noted as the formulation of our method is the primary concern.⁷⁵

Henkelman, building on the work of Tigay and Bernabe, formulated a method for evaluating claims of 'literary borrowing' between narratives concerned with our protagonists, as well as between other Mesopotamian royal archetypes. These two papers are particularly useful to this study, as they enable us to launch from a specifically relevant platform rather than the general.⁷⁶ However, as I will be arguing that the comparable episodes function in specifically parallel ways for their protagonist kings, centring on the ideology surrounding the transfer of power, succession, and accession to legitimate kingship, it is necessary to adapt this method further.

The criteria I suggest are as follows:

- Function is king! The episode must demonstrably function in a comparable way. This does not require the episodes to be wholesale narrative twins, but

⁷⁵ What follows is heavily indebted to the work carried out in this area already by Henkelman (2006:815-816; 2010:324), Tigay (1993) and Bernabe (1995). Despite the incredibly valuable criteria outlined by all three scholars, it is necessary to refine the method slightly in line with the requirements of the current project. I lay no claims to a comprehensive method for the analysis of 'literary borrowing', but instead outline a specific criteria for evaluation parallels in both function and content.

⁷⁶ Henkelman 2006:815-816; 2010:324. His criteria were as follows: 'series of parallels in a single story; original story line or part of it; number and character of secondary figures; blind motifs (redundant in the new story, but relevant in the original); significant details (names, loanwords, special objects, rare combinations, similes); popularity and spread of the original tradition (story, theme, motif); occurrence of 'literary borrowings' of the same motif/theme in other receptive traditions; occurrence of other 'literary borrowings' in same work, oeuvre, genre, period or culture.'

simply that they can be seen to be similar in how they advance the stories and the positions of their protagonist kings.

- Comparable identity, character, function, and ambitions for the protagonists of each story. This is not always necessary in comparative studies, but the fact that both narrative traditions focus on archetypal kings of Mesopotamia indicates that the parallels are not coincidental and have a common meaning.
- Geographical congruity and topographical parallels in the presented action. By this those operating in areas such as Mesopotamia plausibly and understandably see their narrative traditions undergo degrees of syncretism. This, as with the immediately preceding point, strengthens the argument for deliberate comparison, at least at some point, in some quarters. In addition to this, parallel topography in other locales may allow the tale to transfer to a new location that shares the original's characteristics.⁷⁷
- There must exist, a complex pattern of parallels between the comparable episodes. This is somewhat inclusive of the three criteria above, but encompasses much more down to the smallest motif.
- Blind and 'semi-blind' motifs (as Henkelman states blind motifs represent something significant in the original story, but redundant in the new story).⁷⁸ I have expanded this slightly, and somewhat pedantically, to include a middle ground. This is where the detail has lost its original significance, but retains aspects of its function).
- The opportunity for influence is significant. This includes the popularity and spread of the original story, but also addresses circumstances for contact and reasons for transmission.

⁷⁷ See Lane Fox (2008:255ff) where he emphasizes the role of landscape in the telling and transmission of tales, focalised upon Mount Kasios; Arrian (*Anab.* V.3.1-4) provides an account of a tale recorded by Eratosthenes the Cyrenaean, which details how the myth of the bound Prometheus was transferred from Pontus to a rock and cave in India by the campaigning Macedonians.

⁷⁸ Henkelman 2006:815.

- The lack of an evident simpler root of and reason for the transmission of the pattern. Notably, the same complex pattern existing in securely separate and more easily reconcilable literature.
- Occurrence of other literary borrowings within the narratives, supporting the receptive culture of the tradition.

The above criteria are naturally project specific. This enables me to be more rigid and demanding of the parallels than would normally be the practice. Certain strictures that I am placing on the parallels would be unfair and unnecessary in general analysis of 'literary borrowing'. However, in relation to our current project it is necessary to establish further parallels in character and function to enable the discussion of the conceptual replacement of one tradition by the other. This is because it is not just the borrowing of narrative kingship models from one king to another, but their surpassing and the supplanting of the archetypal figure that is being evaluated.

2.3 Entextualisation, not simply contextualisation

With the criteria for similarities established, it is necessary to discuss the significance of differences. Tigay argued, in my opinion correctly, that it does not serve one to be too arbitrary when evaluating parallels in texts.⁷⁹ Firstly, it is not being argued that the *Epic* has simply been repositied as the *Epic of Alexander*. Far from it, the Alexander narratives represent something new and in many ways unique. The relationship is between the protagonists, not their narratives. Therefore, differences are to be expected, not least due to the interference of Alexander's own life and story. Additionally, we must consider that beyond the actual events of Alexander's life and the *Epic*, there are a whole host of narrative models and cultural factors influencing the narratives of Alexander.⁸⁰ Therefore,

⁷⁹ Tigay (1993) re-secured arguments for biblical parallels with the *Epic* by demonstrating that differences occur in parallel texts as local and cultural variations are expressed. He did this by demonstrating adaption in the Hittite version of the *Epic* compared to its OB and SB Mesopotamian counterparts. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider any arbitrary expulsion of arguments for parallels solely due to points of variation to be methodologically shaky.

⁸⁰ N.B. It seems pertinent here to highlight that I do not perceive the *Epic* in any way to be the primary narrative influencing the Alexander tradition, but simply a thread in an imperceivable web.

what we are left with will display aspects of Greek, Macedonian, Persian, Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Roman culture, amongst others.

As Bernabe argues receiving cultures/authors potentially adapt narrative tradition in line with its/their own priorities and cultural milieu.⁸¹ Of course, contextualisation of the narratives is valuable for many questions and certain studies, but it is also important to realise that the Alexander tradition, and its composite episodes, underwent entextualisation.⁸² Variations and specifically locatable motifs are better explained as the unique contribution of the receiving culture.⁸³ Through them receptor authors/cultures are seen to expand and adapt episodes in line with known comparable narratives.⁸⁴ All that the identification of such engagements does is enhance the case for intertextuality and myth imbued accounts, as any examples from whatever source demonstrate the practice in the narrative.⁸⁵

I stress this at the outset of the study as the misconception of the multicultural milieu behind the narratives of Alexander, and the presentation of a false dichotomy between cultural influences when arguing against parallels, are obstructions to further advancements in their analysis. An example of this flawed approach can be seen in Beard's assessment of the state of Alexander scholarship (overtly influenced by Davidson's review article where he famously coined 'Alexanderland').⁸⁶ Beard bemoans scholarship on Alexander and then ironically falls into the Alexander trap herself. Her contextualisation of the Roman narratives and recognition of Roman parallels inspires her suggestion that the Alexander we have is quintessentially Roman.⁸⁷ This is not the place to discuss the issues and complexities facing Beard's assessment, but where she is comfortably correct, is

⁸¹ Bernabe 1995:16-17.

⁸² When used in this sense, 'contextualisation' provides us with tangible locale, not only geographically, but culturally, temporally, socially, politically, etc (with varying degrees of accuracy), whilst 'entextualisation' (the most suitable for Alexander studies) involves a continuing process of contextualising, de-contextualising, and contextualising again, as the narrative tradition moves through time and space (Lucey 2011:125-128).

⁸³ Tigay 1993:250-251.

⁸⁴ Bernabe 1995:16-17.

⁸⁵ Cf. Henkelman 2006:815-816; 2010:324.

⁸⁶ Beard 2013:42-43; cf. Davidson 2001.

⁸⁷ Beard 2013:51-53.

that there is an inescapable Roman contextualisation of the tradition. This means that valuable studies such as that by Spencer serve to enlighten important facets to the picture of Alexander we possess.⁸⁸ However, the identification of a Roman parallel does not trump all other parallels, but simply serves to indicate why this episode persisted and took its form in the Roman sphere.

Stoneman's argument for Egyptian exclusivity in the sources for *Pseudo-Callisthenes* is another example of this restrictive approach championed by Beard.⁸⁹ The illuminating Egyptian parallels are compelling, but they should not render a conclusion that the influence is exclusively Egyptian. Again all that has been demonstrated is an Egyptian contextualisation of aspects of the tradition. These are pertinent concerns for Alexander scholarship and the analysis of his relationship with Gilgamesh. The previous attempts to draw parallels between the subject traditions have been met with exactly this obstruction and limited approach (see chapter six).⁹⁰

2.4 Language as a barrier

A further obstruction to the parallels may be considered to be one of language and transmission between languages. The Gilgamesh narratives that we will utilise are in Sumerian and Akkadian, whilst the Alexander narratives are in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Armenian. However, Berossos disposes of this obstacle immediately. Through him we have an attested and surviving (through citation) example of a Babylonian priest who made efforts to transfer Mesopotamian traditions and kingship narrative to a Greek-speaking audience. He is clearly proficient in Greek, Akkadian, and Sumerian, and so presents an evident bridge for the ideology and parallels to cross in the early Seleucid period.⁹¹ Further, Berossos was clearly not an isolated phenomenon. However one interprets the *Graeco-Babyloniaca*, they

⁸⁸ Spencer 2002.

⁸⁹ Stoneman 1992.

⁹⁰ E.g. Friedlaender 1910; 1913; Stoneman 1992.

⁹¹ Cf. Burstein 1978; Kuhrt 1987; Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996; De Breucker 2011; 2013; Haubold 2013a:160-163; 2013b; 2013c.

demonstrate interaction between the Greek language and Akkadian.⁹² The Babylonian priest, Belephantes, who warns Alexander not to enter Babylon ahead of his death, has been identified with a genuine contemporary Babylonian figure, Bēl-apla-iddin, providing us with another example.⁹³ The list goes on, Seleucid engagement with the priests and temples, Alexander's own presented engagement with the Babylonian priests upon his duties as king of the city (see chapter one). Priestly instruction and dialogue with those with access to Mesopotamia tradition was clearly achieved for the new Macedonian kings of Babylon. Therefore, language is quite simply not a barrier to the transmission of parallels, the contents of the *Epic*, or Mesopotamian kingship ideology more generally.

2.5 What is in a name? The absence of Gilgamesh's name from the Alexander narratives

A final concern might be the absence of Gilgamesh's name from any surviving Alexander narrative. However, to demand such an overt reference would represent a rather basic and simplistic approach to a study of comparisons between traditions. This point will be exemplified in chapters three and four where 'Humbaban' episodes will be elucidated for Assurbanipal and Nebuchadnezzar II with no mention of Gilgamesh in either. Further Alexander's own narrative tradition clearly exhibits the practice of subtle or silent emulation of monarchical predecessors. For obvious reasons, the emulation of Darius I in the Indus Valley is achieved, but passed over in silence.⁹⁴ Likewise, the advance through the Persian Gates to sack Persepolis in the Alexander narratives clearly mirrors Xerxes' advance through the pass of Thermopylae to the Sack of Athens in Herodotus.⁹⁵ Thus Alexander campaigns in his narrative tradition comparably to the Great King without being overtly compared or associated with him. As a final example,

⁹² Cf. Pinches 1902; Sayce 1902; Schileico 1928; Sollberger 1962; Geller 1983; Black & Sherwin-White 1984; Knudsen 1990:150-151; Dalley 1998:40-41; Gesche 2000:185; Oelsner 2002:16-17; Westenholz 2007:274-280; Clancier 2011.

⁹³ Van der Spek 2003:333-334; cf. Diod. xvii.112.3.

⁹⁴ Cf. Briant 2002:754-762; 1027-1029; 2010:37-38; Howe & Mueller 2012:26-31.

⁹⁵ Cf. Bowden 2014:38-39.

consider the clear emulation of Semiramis (as found in Ctesias) at the Rock of Sogdiana in Arrian with no mention of the mythical Assyrian queen in sight.⁹⁶

However, Semiramis is overtly emulated in other parts of the Alexander narratives and this presents us with another possibility concerning the absence of Gilgamesh's name in the tradition.⁹⁷ This is the supplanting of Gilgamesh in the extant narratives by competing or complementary models for the ideology and episodes. A host of former kings of Mesopotamia are mentioned in the Alexander narratives, including Cyrus, Assurbanipal, and Nebuchadnezzar II.⁹⁸ The last two of these will be shown to have emulated Gilgamesh themselves, therefore presenting the possibility that the comparable scenes in the Alexander tradition are a result of emulation of these predecessors rather than specifically Gilgamesh himself. This must always be a consideration that is weighed when evaluating the connection between our subject traditions. However, one does not necessarily need to be preclusive of the other in a region where continuity in kingship was central to the ideology. Further despite the identification of comparable campaigns for these other Mesopotamian monarchs, the full complexity of the parallels only exists between the narrative traditions of Alexander and Gilgamesh. Therefore, currently, the Gilgamesh tradition represents the most secure and comprehensive choice for comparison.

The final and most conspicuous hiding place for the overt emulation of Gilgamesh in the Alexander tradition would be in comparable figure of Herakles. Alexander's emulation of Herakles is overtly made within his narrative tradition.⁹⁹ Yet there is something very Gilgamesh about Herakles. The non-descript wanderings in lion's garb offers a compelling parallel and their connectivity has long been considered in scholarship.¹⁰⁰ In fact, it has been argued that Alexander's engagement with his ancestral Herakles was galvanised by Herakles' parallelism with a host of

⁹⁶ Diod. ii.6 (sourced via Ctesias); Arrian, *Anab.* iv.18.4-19.5 (cf. Szalc 2015).

⁹⁷ Cf. Szalc 2015.

⁹⁸ For Cyrus (and Semiramis), see Arrian, *Anab.* vi.24.2-4. Strabo, xv.1.5 attributes this to Nearchus' narrative. For Nebuchadnezzar, see *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.18.1 (*beta*; Stoneman 2012:108-109); for Assurbanipal (Sardanapalus), see Arrian, *Anab.* ii.4.2-4.

⁹⁹ Cf. Heckel 2015:25ff.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *SB Epic*, x.258-261 (George 2003:692-695); also see Brundage 1958; Collon 1982:41; 101; seal no.213 (cf. Frayne 2010:166-168; 178-179; 377).

comparable figures as he advanced eastwards.¹⁰¹ This malleability of Herakles enables him to supplant or syncretise with regional models.¹⁰² Just as a Mesopotamian viewer might consider Herakles as a Greek version of Gilgamesh, so might Gilgamesh be translated as Herakles to a Greek-speaking audience.¹⁰³ Therefore, one may even consider that Gilgamesh has been hiding in plain sight all this time in the narratives of Alexander, lost in the absorbing Herakles.

2.6 A final point of method

With Gilgamesh potentially sighted, all that is left to address before embarking on the comparative chapters is why I have chosen these particular episodes upon which to focus the study. The ethos of excavation occupies a position in the decision, as one presents what one uncovers. However, it is possible to be more rigid than this. Some of the decisions were made for me in advance. The common mythical wanderings of our protagonists had already been connected, and so could not be ignored.¹⁰⁴ Further, Henkelman's identification of a structural parallel in our subject traditions, where the death of Darius occupied the same narrative position ahead of the wanderings as Enkidu's death in the *Epic*, encouraged further analysis.¹⁰⁵ Upon investigation, I was able to detect the conceptualisation of Enkidu as the dying king, and identify the ideological connection between the wanderings and the protagonist's accession to kingship.

The choice of the complementary episode, the 'Humbaban' campaign, stems from the identification of the ideological transfer of hegemonic kingship within the narrative, and the significance of the conquest of Humbaba in summaries of

¹⁰¹ Nicgorski 2005:105; Kleiner 1949:11-17; Seltman 1955:205; Pollitt 1986:26; cf. Lane Fox 2008:203-210.

¹⁰² Cf. Arrian, *Anab.* v.3.1-4. Note, for example, that there is no evidence for Herakles or Dionysus in India before Alexander's campaign; cf. Lane Fox 2008:188-191. Also see the comparison of Nebuchadnezzar's and Herakles' achievements in Hellenistic sources (*FGrHist* 715 F1; Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:59; cf. Carpenter 1986:115. See Errington, Cribb & Claringbull 1992:4-10; 36-38; 99-105 for the spread of Herakles image in the Hellenistic East.

¹⁰³ Note how Berossos overtly states that Bel can be translated as Zeus (Burstein 1978:15; Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:45; *FGrHist* 273 F79; Also see Smith's study (2008) for the 'translation of god' in the ancient Near East, which further elucidates the mutability and/or association of divine figures in the region.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Meissner 1894; Henkelman 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Henkelman 2010:350-351.

Gilgamesh's achievements from within the tradition. Consider the *Death of Gilgamesh*, where the campaign against Humbaba and the journey to Utanapishti are singled out by the gods as his great deeds (specifically, they are the only ones mentioned).¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the Gilgamesh tradition itself designates these two episodes as the two most significant events of Gilgamesh's life. This then seems as good a place as possible to search for emulation by Alexander. The approach has proven fruitful, and what follows are the results.

¹⁰⁶ E.g. *DG*, M.52-60 (Gadotti 2014:104-106).

Chapter Three

A king to surpass all others: the acquisition of supreme kingship through the conquest of an undefeatable enemy

So we begin the comparative sections of this study. As has already been outlined, the current chapter will present a recontextualisation of Gilgamesh's Humbaba campaign. Its pair, chapter four, will go on to make the case for a comparable 'Humbaban' campaign in the Alexander tradition, centralised on the Siege of Tyre. This is perhaps the most complicated area of comparison due to the somewhat blind status of the episodes in both the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Alexander narratives. This is partly because it is not entirely clear exactly what it is that inspires the expedition against Humbaba in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, nor are Alexander's motives for attacking Tyre always completely cogent. Therefore, it is necessary to first establish the functionality of the Humbaba episode for the Gilgamesh, and then draw comparisons with the presented parallel episode in the Alexander narratives.

I will endeavour to demonstrate that these episodes are ideologically significant for kingship in Mesopotamia, signalling the king's right to rule from the Upper to the Lower Sea. Supreme kingship must be obtained or at least ratified through combat, and essentially, both episodes can be read as campaign narratives. The former is steeped in ideology and mythology, whilst the latter can be argued to engage with the mythologizing of a campaign. It is through the parallel actions of campaigning to the Cedar Forest/Mountain, the besting of an undefeatable opponent, and the dedication of the sacred cedar that both our protagonists establish and legitimise their right to rule over foreign lands from a Mesopotamian standpoint. Gilgamesh must best Humbaba to return imbued with divinely sanctioned royal power, whilst Alexander must take Tyre. Both episodes in their respective traditions elevate their protagonists to a figure of undeniable royal power.

3.1 Summary of the journey to the Cedar Forest and the slaying of Humbaba in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*

With my intentions asserted, it is necessary to render a brief synopsis of the relevant episode in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Although I do not intend to argue for a comparable journey to the Cedar Forest/Mountain by our protagonists Gilgamesh and Alexander, the conception of the expedition, the journey and the actual events in the Cedar Forest all inform the episode in the Gilgamesh tradition. Therefore, it will have to be considered as a whole. The journey to the Cedar Forest and the slaying of Humbaba exist both as intrinsically part of the *Epic* and also independently within the wider tradition. The three prominent and ever present characters are the antagonist Humbaba (also known by the name Huwawa), our protagonist Gilgamesh (Bilgames), and his companion on the expedition, Enkidu.¹⁰⁷ The positions, motives, and functions of the characters are by no means simple and may not even remain stable within the various versions of the episode. Despite this, I will argue that a common overall function for the episode in relation to the status of the protagonist can be discerned universally throughout the tradition.

When approached through the format of the *SB Epic of Gilgamesh*, the journey to the Cedar Forest and the conflict with Humbaba occupy narrative space in four of the tablets. What follows is a very brief summary of each tablet's contents concerning the expedition. In Tablet II, we have the first mention of Humbaba, the proposal of the expedition, and speeches for and against such an enterprise.¹⁰⁸ Tablet III opens with a passage of advice concerning the expedition. It continues to detail the enlisting of the aid of the gods (specifically Shamash), the instructions from Gilgamesh to the citizens of Uruk for governance in his absence, and the departure from the city of Gilgamesh and Enkidu.¹⁰⁹ Tablet IV narrates the journey of Gilgamesh and Enkidu to the Cedar Forest, a series of propitious dreams and their interpretations, and culminates with the arrival of the protagonist and his

¹⁰⁷ This list should perhaps be augmented by Shamash (Utu), but as the sun god is unequivocally divine he is considered as operating somewhat above or separately from the mortal characters. Cf. Rubio (2012) who argues that the protagonist's name should be universally read as Gilgamesh.

¹⁰⁸ George 2003:455-458; 558-571.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid 458-462; 572-585.

companion at the limits of the Cedar Forest.¹¹⁰ The final actions of the episode are narrated in Tablet V. Gilgamesh and Enkidu enter the Cedar Forest, they battle with and slay Humbaba, fell some cedar, and begin their journey to Nippur with the cedar and Humbaba's head.¹¹¹

The intention of the above summary is to establish a rough sequence of events ahead of further discussion. It is in no way to be considered a detailed account. With this skeleton in place, it is now possible to discuss the function of the episode of the slaying of Humbaba within the Gilgamesh tradition with regards to the elevation of Gilgamesh's kingship to a position of supreme legitimacy.

3.2 Exegesis of the expedition to the Cedar Forest and the slaying of Humbaba in the Gilgamesh tradition

As stated above, it is my intention to render a reading of the expedition to the Cedar Forest and the slaying of Humbaba in the Gilgamesh tradition that emphasizes the royal ideology of the episode. Therefore, I will avoid words such as 'quest' and 'adventure' in favour of terms such as 'expedition' and 'campaign'. Such pedantries will help separate this discussion from others that focus on hero-legends and hero-patterns.¹¹² This is done in an effort to maintain clarity, as I wish to discuss aspects that can be seen as intrinsically 'royal' rather than 'heroic'. I understand that this is in many ways an impossible task, as heroism and kingship are often melded within the same account.¹¹³ However, it is, for example, possible to focus upon the specifically royal application of heroism rather than the general. Further, it is the contention of this study that this episode was able to be viewed in a specifically militarised way, perceiving its contents as a mythologized military campaign. Therefore, the role of a subsequent king as a military leader and focal

¹¹⁰ Ibid 463-466; 586-601; cf. Al-Rawi & George 2014 and *SB Epic*, v.1 (George 2003:602-603).

¹¹¹ Ibid 466-470; 602-615; Al-Rawi & George 2014:76-83.

¹¹² For examples, see Wolff 1969; Forsyth 1981; Rank 1990; van Nortwick 1996:8-38; West 1997:334ff; Campbell 2008:158-161; Anderson 2012. This desire to segregate this project from such studies is not a commentary on their perceived validity, but simply a partition of two different areas of exegesis and comparison, i.e. hero-legends, and kingship narrative.

¹¹³ For example, see how George (2007a:447ff) refers to Gilgamesh as both a king and a hero. This melded identity of hero and king is of course natural and is even present in the *Epic* itself, [*šu-t*]u-ur eli(ugu) šarri(lugal)^{mes} šá-nu-'ú-du bēl(en) gat-ti 'Surpassing all kings, hero endowed with a superb physique' (*SB Epic*, i.29, George 2003:538-539). See George (2003:92-101) for Gilgamesh the hero, and (Ibid 101-119) for Gilgamesh the king.

point may naturally elevate him to the position of narrative protagonist and as such make him a comparable figure to Gilgamesh. One only has to think of the first and third person narrative style of Near Eastern royal annals and inscriptions to understand how this is possible.¹¹⁴

3.2.1 Motive

We may begin the analysis of the episode with the motive. The question of why Gilgamesh sets out on the expedition in the first place is a critical consideration. Unfortunately, the fragmentary nature of the relevant passage in Tablet II of the *SB Epic* means that we are currently unable to retrieve Gilgamesh's initially stated motives in this contextualisation of the episode.¹¹⁵ George has suggested that it may have been to distract Enkidu from his misery.¹¹⁶ This is of course possible, but Enkidu's dread at the idea of a campaign against Humbaba seems to add to his woes, rather than distract from them.¹¹⁷

One simple reason may be for the glory and renown that such an undertaking would bestow upon those who carry it out. This is something that *OB Epic* engages with,

^dGIŠ pi-šu i-pu-š[a-am-ma]
is-sà-qar-am a-na ^de[n-ki-du₁₀]
ma-an-nu ib-ri e-lu-ú ša-m[a-i]
i-lu-ma it-ti ^dšamšim (utu) da-ri-iš u[š-bu]
a-wi-lu-tum-ma ma-nu-ú u₄-mu-ša
mi-im-ma ša i-te-né-pu-šu ša-ru-ma
at-ta an-na-nu-um-ma ta-dar mu-tam
mi-is-su da-na-nu qar-ra-du-ti-ka
lu-ul-li-ik-ma i-na pa-ni-ka
pi-ka li-is-si-a-am ʾi-ḥe e ta-du-ur
šum-ma am-ta-qú-ut šu-mi lu uš-zi-iz

¹¹⁴ For examples, see *Neo-Assyrian annals and inscriptions* (Luckenbill 1924; Jacobsen & Lloyd 1935; Leichty 2011; Tadmor & Yamada 2011); *Nabopolassar Cylinder, A Babylon II* (Al-Rawi 1985); *Cyrus Cylinder* (Schadig 2001:550-556; Kuhrt 2007:70-74); *Behistun Inscription, DB* (Kent 1950:116-135; Von Voightlander 1978; Grilott-Susini, Herrenschmidt & Malbran-Labat 1993; Kuhrt 2007:140-158); *Borsippa Cylinder of Antiochus I*, BM 36277 (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991). In most cases, the king is the main mortal protagonist, as is the case with Gilgamesh within the tradition. I have also utilised a combination of military and building works examples, as the episode in the Gilgamesh tradition can be seen to engage with both.

¹¹⁵ *SB Epic*, ii.193ff, George 2003:564-567.

¹¹⁶ George 2003:456.

¹¹⁷ *SB Epic*, ii.216ff. George 2003:566ff.

^dGiš-mi it-ti ^dhu-wa-wa da-pi-nim ta-qum-tam iš-tu

'Gilgamesh opened his mouth,
saying to Enkidu:
'Who is there, my friend, that can climb to the sky?
Only the gods have [dwelled] forever in sunlight.
As for man, his days are numbered,
whatever he may do, it is but wind.
Here are you, afraid of death!
For what purpose is the strength of your valour?
I will walk in front of you,
you can call to me, "Go to, do not fear!"
If I fall, I should have made my name:
(men will say) "Gilgamesh joined battle with ferocious Huwawa!"'
(OB III.138-149)¹¹⁸

This passage is imbued with heroic sentiment, and speaks directly regarding the fame such an expedition would bring, even without success. The sentiment is similar to that found in the Sumerian *Bilgames and Huwawa* poem A (hereafter *GH A*), as a desire to carry out glorious deeds that will outlive his person potentially drives, or at least contributes to our protagonist's yearning for combat with Huwawa.¹¹⁹ Yet in the *OB Epic*, it is the 'without success outcome' that zeros in on the ends of glory and renown, rather than it being the desired end of a successful campaign. This is not an attempt to argue that the glory of the campaign is not present in the *Epic*, but instead that it only forms part of the picture and contributes a portion of the motive. Although the currently extant passages of the *SB Epic* do not emphasise this aspect as overtly from the outset as *GH A* and the *OB Epic* do, it can still be gleaned from the tablets.¹²⁰ The 'for glory's sake' motive may be viewed as intrinsic, but also as subjective. Glory will follow whether successful or not in such an endeavour, obviously amplified in the case of success. The idea that the undertaking of such a campaign will bring considerable fame to its combatants resonates throughout the tradition, but the aims may also be considered more objectively. We may view the glory as a natural result of the expedition, but that a

¹¹⁸ George 2003:200-201.

¹¹⁹ *GH A* (Edzard 1990; 1991; George 1999: 149-161; Fleming and Milstein 2010:182-195). It is possible that glory and renown are not the motivations in *GH B* (Edzard 1993; George 1999:161-166; Fleming and Milstein 2010:85; 196-205), as this is not overtly stated in the extant material. It is possible here that, as the protagonist is faced with the inevitability of death, the cedar is being sourced as an offering to curry favour with the gods.

¹²⁰ For example, see how the campaign against Humbaba is listed by Gilgamesh in his achievements to the Ale-wife in Tablet X.29-45 (George 2003:678-681).

successful campaign is the objective. This does not attempt to separate the objective and subjective, but highlight their mutual significance and interrelation.

This understanding can be further utilised when approaching the more tangible aims of the expedition, i.e. the acquisition of cedar and the slaying of Humbaba. These are not to be divorced from the intrinsic glory attached to the campaign, but considered as both representing significant objective and subjective targets. This is because it is possible to present an ideological value to these achievements concerned with legitimising one's kingship. Either the cedar or Humbaba are universally and overtly stated as objectives from the beginning.¹²¹ However, it is possible to consider either of these objectives as secondary to the other. It has been argued in the case of *GH B* that Huwawa is potentially an unknown entity, and battling him simply becomes a necessity as the guardian of the Cedar Forest attacks our protagonists.¹²² It is true that the acquisition of cedar takes primacy in *GH B* and that Huwawa is not mentioned until he attacks in line 67.¹²³ If Edzard, and Fleming and Milstein are correct and *GH B* represents the earliest extant version of the episode, then it may be that the initial motives differ from what we see in *GH A* and the *OB* and *SB Epics*.¹²⁴ It would be possible to consider that Huwawa was originally a secondary figure or simply an obstacle rather than an aim. However, we should be careful here. Although it currently appears that conflict with Huwawa is not an initial motive for the expedition in *GH B*, Huwawa and the cedar are still linked, an ever present connection. Huwawa must still be bested to obtain the cedar and as such their collective significance is maintained, even if not foreseen.

Of course, it is equally possible to consider that the acquisition of cedar as simply emblematic of having bested Humbaba. This is currently supported by Humbaba being mentioned first in all versions except *GH B*. In fact, in the currently extant material, the *SB Epic* does not appear to mention felling cedar until Humbaba is

¹²¹ *GH A*, 1ff (George 1999:149-161; Fleming and Milstein 2010:182-195; Edzard 1991); *GH B*, 19ff (Edzard 1993; George 1999:161-166; Fleming and Milstein 2010:196-205); *OB* III.97ff (George 2003:198ff); *SB Epic*, ii.201ff (George 2003:566).

¹²² Fleming and Milstein 2010:70-77.

¹²³ Edzard 1993:24.

¹²⁴ Edzard 1993; Fleming and Milstein 2010:70ff.

defeated and pleading for his life.¹²⁵ It should be noted that even here it is trees and not explicitly cedar that is offered. The felling of cedar is not overtly cited until v.293 in the extant material.¹²⁶ Now I am not arguing for primacy of either, just highlighting the ambiguity. Perhaps, when we read one, we should also consider the other, as an ancient audience may have, i.e. cedar represents Humbaba and Humbaba represents the cedar. It seems that we are dealing with a considerably nuanced relationship and that these two primary objectives cannot be divorced from each other. Despite this assertion, it may help to discuss them somewhat separately below.

3.2.2 The ancient quality of cedar and royal ideology

As stated, the acquisition of cedar is a significant objective of the expedition. All known versions of the episode highlight the need or desire to acquire and transport back the sacred cedar. With this in mind, one can begin the analysis with the pragmatic. Cedar and timber in general were a necessity in the ancient world for use in a range of building tasks.¹²⁷ Although this reality should not be forgotten, what is of interest to this study is why and how such an activity became encoded in long-lived kingship narrative. One answer may be the continued need by subsequent cultures and rulers to carry out or order the same action, therefore giving the task a continued significance. This pragmatic need for subsequent rulers to constantly source timber, and perhaps cedar, provides an opportunity for comparison with the Gilgamesh model in narrative. I will return to this below. However, the mundane repetitive requirement does not explain the narrative embellishments in the Gilgamesh episode. It is important to question why a character such as Humbaba is included at all. Yet, with all this said, it is the desire to acquire the cedar for its use in building that is explicitly stated in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*,

¹²⁵ *SB Epic*, v.153ff (George 2003:608-609); cf. Al-Rawi & George 2014.

¹²⁶ George 2003:612-613; cf. Al-Rawi & George 2014.

¹²⁷ For examples see Mikesell 1969; Meiggs 1982; Borza 1987; Liphshitz & Biger 1991; Potts 1997:106-115. Of course, it is probable that this need for timber gave rise to this aspect of the Gilgamesh tradition in the first place (Hansman 1976).

^den-ki-dù pa-a-šú īpuš(dù)-ma iqabbi(dug₄.ga) izakkara(mu)^{ra} ana ^dGIŠ-gím-maš
 ib-ri nit-ta-ki-is ^{giš}erēna(eren) ši-i-ḫu
 šá muḫ-ḫa-šu šamê(an)^e nak-pí
 e-pu-uš-ma ^{giš}dalta(ig) šá 6 nindan me-lu-šá 2 nindan ru-pu-us-su
 1 ammat(kùš) ú-pu-šú šu!-ku-šá sa-ḫir-šá u šá-gam-ma-šá šá iš-te-en-ma
 ana nippuri(nibru)^{ki} li-bil-lu ^{id}pu-rat-t[um um-man?]
 nippuri^{ki} l[i-iḫ-du?]

‘Enkidu opened his mouth to speak, saying to Gilgamesh:

“My friend, we have cut down a lofty cedar,

whose top abutted the heavens.

I made a door – six rods is its height, two rods its breadth, one cubit its thickness,

its pole, its top pivot and its bottom pivot are all of a piece.

Let the river Euphrates carry (it) to Nippur,

let Nippur’s [people rejoice!]”

(*SB Epic*, v.292-298)¹²⁸

From the above, it is apparent that a door is being fashioned from a particularly impressive cedar and is being sent to Nippur. What can be inferred is confirmed by an OB tablet currently in Baghdad (OB IM), specifically, that this application of the cedar is to build a door to adorn the temple of Enlil at Nippur.¹²⁹ This door only seems to account for one of the felled cedars, yet it is singled out as a superior example, therefore giving it a degree of primacy in the narrative. Certain questions are raised by this action, notably, the reason for the dedication of the temple door and the reason for choosing cedar as the material. I will return to Enlil and Nippur below, but the sanctity or special status of the cedar warrants further discussion here.

This special status or position for the cedar is evident throughout. This is perhaps demonstrated most clearly by the designating of region as the ‘Cedar Forest’ across the tradition, despite the other trees also growing there.¹³⁰ Again, a pragmatist

¹²⁸ George 2003:612-615; cf. MS ff v.311-319 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:82-83). The *SB Epic* is fragmentary at the end of Tablet V, but seems to quickly move on to Tablet VI, which details the interaction between Gilgamesh and Ishtar, and the resulting *Bull of Heaven* episode. It then returns to refer to the creation and dedication of the door during Enkidu’s lament towards the beginning of Tablet VII (line 32ff; George 2003:614-637).

¹²⁹ OB IM, 22-28 (George 2003:270-271; also cf. MS ff *SB* v.313-319 in Al-Rawi & George 2014:82-83). It is possible that a parallel (or the same) function for the cedar is being discussed in a fragmentary part of the *SB Epic*, iii.147ff (George 2003:582-583).

¹³⁰ Cedars are not the only trees in the forest. *SB Epic*, v.9-12 (George 2003:602-605). For examples of the designation ‘Cedar Forest’, see George 2003; Edzard 1990; 1991; 1993. Cf. MS ff v.1-16 for the prominence given to the cedar in the initial description of the Forest (Al-Rawi & George 2014:76-77).

would point out that the cedars were likely the most populous, but it is the narrative significance imbued that is interesting here, not any potential environmental reality. Within the Gilgamesh tradition, the exceptional nature of the cedar is highlighted at various junctures. In the *SB Epic*, whilst the protagonists are marvelling at the forest, it is the height of the cedars that first articulates the wonder (v.1ff).¹³¹ When they are preparing the door for Enlil's temple, it is a cedar 'whose top abutted the heavens' that is chosen to fashion it (v.294).¹³² It is here that something can be gleaned from the symbolism of the cedar, as a result of its vast height.

This can be approached via the ancient quality of the cedars to those who observe them and their ability to scale heights unachievable for man.¹³³ The former is easily articulated. The sheer height that cedars grow to and the time it takes for them to reach the height means that it is possible to consider the cedars as emblematic of long life, perhaps even immortal life.¹³⁴ It is plausible that this association with cedar is why the expedition is first proposed by a disconsolate Gilgamesh in *GH A* and *GH B*. When faced with the perishable nature of man, Gilgamesh searches out the durable in the landscape, the mighty cedar. Now it is true that this motive seems to speak more to humanist concerns, but it can also be considered with reference to kingship. The desire to live long like the mighty cedars can be considered in relation to one's own reign and to the continuity of one's dynasty.¹³⁵ The offering or dedication of the cedar to Enlil at Nippur, and the journey itself, may be considered an attempt to receive the supreme blessing for exactly such circumstances of personal and familial royal longevity.¹³⁶ The symbolically durable,

¹³¹ George 2003:602-603

¹³² Ibid 612-613.

¹³³ Consider, *SB Epic*, v.294 (George 2003:612-613), which states that the cedar touches the heavens, with OB III.140-141 (George 2003:200-201), where Gilgamesh addresses man's limitations through an inability to reach the sky and live forever like the gods.

¹³⁴ For the long life of cedar and the claims of even longer life, see Beals 1965; Liphshitz & Biger 1991:167.

¹³⁵ The desire to live long and to ensure the continuity of one's dynasty is articulated in the inscriptions of many kings in Mesopotamia, for examples see *Nineveh A* vi.54-74 (Leichty 2011:25-26); *Cyrus Cylinder* 34-36 (Kuhrt 2007:72); BM 36277 i.16ff (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991:76-77).

¹³⁶ The religious significance of Nippur in Sumerian mythology as the seat of Enlil has been stated elsewhere. The city was known by the name *dur-an-ki* with the main temple complex known as *E-*

even immortal cedars are offered to the god in return for the bestowment of such longevity upon the royal person and his descendants. This understanding sheds new light on Huwawa's epithet, 'the living one'. While Huwawa is lord of the Cedar Mountain, he is ensured long life by the decree of Enlil.¹³⁷

It is the acquisition of divine sanction for one's kingship that I contend can be read to drive the episode within the tradition, and it is this that I intend to argue for the overall royal ideology of this episode. The slaying of Humbaba and the dedication of cedar may be understood not only to represent the surety of longevity in life and power, but also the acquisition of the divinely sanctioned right to rule over the land from the Upper to the Lower Sea (or more generally, over foreign lands). This would mean that the episode may also represent the bestowing or acquisition of greater powers and domain. Naturally, this would be at the expense of others (local rulers) or another (in the succession of empires). As a result, the episode may be read to represent the elevation of an individual from local power to supreme rule.¹³⁸ This will become clearer as the discussion advances.

dur-an-ki, 'bond of sky and earth' and 'House of bond of sky and earth' respectively. Note this is a religious centre of political significance rather than the political base (Crawford 1959; Kramer 1961:xii-xvii; Dalley 2013:114-115). Therefore, if you wish to receive divine sanction then Nippur is the symbolic city to which you must journey. Travelling to Nippur and making offerings to Enlil to obtain his blessing upon your enterprise is evident from very early on in the Sumerian myth of *Enki and Eridu: the journey of the water-god to Nippur* (Kramer 1961:62-63). It is certainly possible to understand the Sumerian myth of *Enki and Eridu*, as a narrative detailing the transfer of kingship and earthly hegemony to Enki and his new city. This royal interpretation is amplified when compared with the Ur III period hymn, *Šulgi D* (esp. lines 375-396). Here, the Neo-Sumerian king returns from the Gutian battlefield to Nippur to be invested by Enlil. Enlil decrees a fate for Šulgi in the hymn that destines him to rule as king and for his reign to live long (Klein 1981:86-89; Frayne 1997:93-94).

¹³⁷ For an example of this designation, i.e. *kur-lú-ti-la-še* 'the living one's mountain', see Edzard (1991:167). Note that Humbaba is stated to have been destined to his position by Enlil (*SB Epic*, ii.227-228; George 2003:566-567).

¹³⁸ *Imgur-Enlil* may be an example of the significance and prevalence of this theme. It is difficult to read the description of the door for Enlil's temple rendered in the *SB Epic of Gilgamesh* (v.292-298) and not picture the reconstruction of the Balawat Gates in the British Museum. These gates were for the palace of Shalmaneser III at the ancient site of *Imgur-Enlil* (Balawat). The naming of this site, *Imgur-Enlil* 'Enlil showed favour' parallels that which we have been discussing, indicating that the entire capital is representative of Enlil's sanction of Shalmaneser III and his father. It is conspicuous that the Balawat Gates depict the subjugation of cities on the Eastern Mediterranean, notably Tyre, and appear to depict the paying of timber (plausibly cedar) as tribute (Barnett 1976:16-23; Fig. 1). One could then extend these parallels to the famous wall of Babylon also titled, *Imgur-Enlil* (cf. George 1992:130-141). It is likewise conspicuous that kings of Babylon are constantly presented rebuilding the Babylonian wall, ideologically signifying the supreme divine sanction on their rule. For examples, see Assurbanipal (*Assurbanipal 1*, 16b-27a; Frame 1995:198) and Cyrus (*Cyrus Cylinder*, 38-43; Kuhrt 2007:72).

3.2.3 Cedar at the borders of empire

It is pertinent to briefly discuss here the location or locations for the Cedar Forest, as these help define this extended dominion through range of conquest. Much has already been written on this topic, which enables considerable brevity on my part. Hansman has addressed in detail in his study the development of the debate and the key contributors of the various theories for locating the Cedar Forest in the early tradition up to his point of publication.¹³⁹ To this we should add Klein and Abraham's subsequent contribution.¹⁴⁰ The debate, or the need to assert a location, is a result of the Sumerian poems never specifically locating the Cedar Mountain in the narratives. However, the general consensus seems to point towards an eastern location in the early tradition. This ambiguity in the Sumerian poems does not initially appear to be shared by the *OB* and *SB Epics*, where the Cedar Forest is overtly located in the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges.¹⁴¹ This has led some scholars to assume that originally eastern Cedar Mountain of the Sumerian poems was migrated to a securely western location in the Akkadian epics.¹⁴²

It is certainly possible that initially the Cedar Forest was located to the East around the Persian Gulf, and that the conquests of Sargon of Akkad to the West meant that this was changed, relocating the Forest to the area around the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. However, I would contend that we should not consider it simply as a case of progression from one location to the other, but instead an

¹³⁹ Hansman 1976:25ff; for example: *in proximity to the Persian Gulf due to association of Humbaba with the Elamite god, Humbar* (Jensen 1900:437-438); *towards the eastern Mediterranean due to the association of Humbaba with the guardian Kombabos in North Syria, and the identification of the Cedar Mountain with Mount Amanus* (Gressmann 1911:111-112); *locates the Cedar Forest of Sargon of Akkad in the Upper country and so near the eastern Mediterranean, notably as a border for Sargonic dominion, yet is open to the possibility that the Cedar Forest of Gilgamesh is near Persian Gulf* (Poebel 1914:177-178; 223-224); and *the Land of Cedar from Gilgamesh tradition located at Dilmun on the Persian Gulf* (Kramer 1963:281-282).

¹⁴⁰ Klein & Abraham 2000:63-65; cf. Steiner 1996; i.e. *the Cedar Mountain of the Sumerian Gilgamesh poems in the eastern Zagros mountain range due the focus of Sumerian epic literature and kingly action in this region*.

¹⁴¹ E.g. *OB Ishchali*, rev.31; *SB Epic*, v.134 (George 2003:262-263; 608-609); cf. George 1990; Klein & Abraham 2000:66-72.

¹⁴² E.g. Klein & Abraham 2000:63; Woods 2009:191.

expansion through which either and both locations could be and are meant. For me, the conclusion from the many discussions is that the Cedar Forest was somewhat itinerant within the tradition, at times depending on the contemporary activities of Mesopotamian kings. Any arbitrary attempt to single out a fixed mountain or location diminishes the significance of the continued entextualisation of the campaign.¹⁴³ One should keep in mind that the Ur III period Gilgamesh poems post-date Sargon's westward expansion.

Therefore, as Mesopotamian empires spread to conquer lands as far as the Upper and Lower Seas, the locating of the episode may have become more sophisticated. An aspect of the tradition that may support this theory comes from Tablet V of the *SB Epic*. We appear to be in Lebanon for the culmination of the episode, but consider a detail provided when Humbaba and Gilgamesh are locked in battle,

ina a-si-du še-pi-šú-nu qa-q-a-ri i-bi-iš-šú
ina sa-a-ri-šú-nu uḫ-tap^{te}-pu-ú si-ra-ra u la-ba-na-nu

'At the heels of their feet the earth was splitting apart,
 as they whirled around Sirara and Lebanon were sundered.'
 (*SB Epic*, v.133-134)¹⁴⁴

There is nothing startling about Lebanon being sundered by this epic battle, but Sirara may be a more significant detail than it first appears. Conventionally, this has been viewed to refer to the Anti-Lebanon mountain range. George's argument for an imbedded geological aetiology myth is extremely appealing. He argues that these lines provide a cultural explanation for the creation of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges and their dividing rift valley (the Beqaa Valley).¹⁴⁵ However, it is also possible to consider Sirara as referring to the area of the Persian Gulf and this has a considerable Mesopotamian pedigree.

¹⁴³ It should be noted here that *Sargon, the Lion* (rev. line.13; Westenholz 1997:100-101) seems to locate the Cedar Forest in Elam (cf. with *Sargon in Foreign Lands* where the Cedar Forest is located around the Mediterranean; Westenholz 1997:82-83). So we seem to have Sargon of Akkad campaigning to Cedar Forests in both directions within his narrative tradition.

¹⁴⁴ George 2003:608-609; cf. OB Ishchali, rev.31 (George 2003:262-263; 266).

¹⁴⁵ George 1990. See also Cogan (1984:258), Sherwin (2003:521), and Chan (2009:731), who all identify Sirara with campaigning to the West and approximately, Anti-Lebanon.

Sirara (aka Nanshe) was the Sumerian goddess of the Persian Gulf, as appointed by Enki.¹⁴⁶ Sirara also specifically referred to the goddess' temple and seat, as well as her city (aka Nina/Nigin, modern Surghul) on the Persian Gulf.¹⁴⁷ As cities and temples were somewhat synonymous with mountains in Mesopotamian tradition, we are presented with decisive evidence for a metaphorical Mount Sirara on the Persian Gulf from the Third Millennium into the Early Second Millennium BCE.¹⁴⁸ Also, significantly, Nanshe is given the epithet, *nin-in-dub-ba* 'lady of the border' in two surviving inscription by Shulgi, the Ur III period king.¹⁴⁹ Thus, confirming her identification with territorial limits at the Lower Sea. Therefore, we may consider that a wider territory or dual-territories are being sundered in this epic battle, and that both locations for the Cedar Forest are being referred to at the same time in the narrative. Thus the battle may be considered as being fought simultaneously on the coasts of the Upper and Lower Seas for dominion over and to both regions. Gilgamesh is campaigning to the opposing limits of the Great King's territory in the same, singular narrative episode of conquest, achieving hegemony to both when victorious.

This theory is not set up in opposition to George's geological aetiology exegesis, but in complement, considering a possible further level of sophistication and symbolic complexity alive within the Gilgamesh tradition. In fact, we can complicate the matter even further and consider the identification of Anti-Lebanon as Sirara as emblematic of a Mesopotamian microcosm. This would be envisioned through the Lebanon mountain range representing the Cedar Forest at the Upper Sea, whilst the Anti-Lebanon mountain range was symbolic of the Cedar Forest at the Lower Sea, the Persian Gulf and traditional Sirara. The territory between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges may be then viewed as symbolic of the land between the two more distant mountain and sea frontiers, therefore creating a symbolic microcosm affirming the grander dominion of the Mesopotamian monarch. This

¹⁴⁶ Kramer 1961:61; Heimpel 1981; Averbeck 2003:760-761; Black, Cunningham, Robson, and Zolyomi 2004:215-225.

¹⁴⁷ Heimpel 1981:98-101; Zarins 1992:66; Veldhuis 2004:19-24; Nadali, Polcaro & Verderame 2016; cf. *Nanshe Hymn* (Heimpel 1981:82-98); *Royal Chronicle of Lagash* (Glassner 2004:144-149).

¹⁴⁸ CAD xvii.1:57; Steinkeller 2007:225-232; cf. *Nanshe hymn*, 1-9 (Heimpel 1981:82-83);

¹⁴⁹ Šulgi E3/2.1.2.9/10 (Frayne 1997:119-120).

could be considered plausibly as early as Sargon of Akkad's campaigns to the West, and so Sirara could have been a name that Mount Anti-Lebanon was known by from as early as the Third Millennium BCE. In this way, we can actually consider this epic battle as a myth of creation. This is because the battle creates the new landscape between the Upper and Lower Seas, as it tears the mountains asunder. Therefore, all that lies between actually lies within the Cedar Mountains and the victor's territory.

As George highlights, an Old Assyrian, Sargon of Akkad, pseudo-autobiography from Kultepe presents comparable action. It presents the sundering of a mountain as a metaphor for the conquest of Sargon when it states, *ša-du-a-am hu-ma-nam a-ši-ni-šu am-ḥa-sú-ma ki-ma sí-ki-tim i-ba-ri-šu-nu ṣa-al-mi ú-ša-zi-iz*, 'I smote Mount Amanus in two and set up a representation of myself between them as a peg of ownership'.¹⁵⁰ Yet, perhaps even further than the metaphor of conquest that George presents, it likewise represents the creation of the conquered territory in the act of conquest. The mountain is split and the territory inbetween is claimed. It should be noted that Mount Amanus (Cilicia) is another proposed location for the Cedar Forest and the Cedar Mountain in Mesopotamian tradition due to the sourcing of timber in this region by the kings of Akkad and Assyria.¹⁵¹ Therefore, the parallel action in the Amanus mountain range plausibly implies that this metaphoric creation of territory goes beyond the Beqaa Valley's topographical reality.

Although I contend that this reading is credible, it should not necessarily be considered the common understanding. Even if I am correct and Anti-Lebanon was symbolically labelled Sirara as Mesopotamian kings extended their hegemony to the West, once so named one cannot be certain how it was understood by any given audience. For many it would have developed to or always represented solely the Levantine region, whilst others may have made the connection and understood a microcosm as I have done. However, by accepting this microcosm the physical

¹⁵⁰ Kt, j/k 97, 47-50 (Gunbatti 1997:135; 153; George 2003:467-468).

¹⁵¹ Gressmann 1911:111-112; Hansman 1976:26; cf. Klein & Abraham 2000:67.

reality that cedars did not grow on the southern Zagros becomes a moot point.¹⁵²
The creation of the Levantine microcosm conceptually transports the Lebanon cedars to the 'Cedar Mountains' on the Persian Gulf.¹⁵³

If this theory of dual-conquest is followed then the subtleties of this are significant. It is possible to consider that a later king campaigning in the area of Lebanon or asserting dominion to either frontier may be paralleled to Gilgamesh. Further, if one battle can be emblematic of conquest in both directions for Gilgamesh, we must consider that this may be true also in the presentation of rule by a later monarch. Conquest in one direction re-affirms dominion to both. This would especially be true of campaigning around the Upper Sea where the microcosm was present in the landscape. Even if an idea of dual-conquest through singular combat is resisted for the *Epic*, it cannot be denied that it is possible to consider the Cedar Forest as situated around either the Persian Gulf or the eastern Mediterranean. Further, the supposed connection and development in parallel to the geo-political developments for Mesopotamian empires plausibly presents a genuine connection between the actions of Mesopotamian kings and the development of the episode, in relation to defining their dominion.

3.2.4 Humbaba, the mighty, Humbaba, the king

Thus far, we have considered the special and potentially symbolic significance of the sacred cedar, whilst presenting a plausible contextualisation for the campaign to the Cedar Forest centred upon imperial ideology. It is now necessary to consider how the guardian fits into this interpretation. For example, one should question why such a monstrous opponent was set up to protect the cedars in the first place. A simple answer is that the special power, status, and elevation that is secured by the protagonist king upon acquisition of the desired cedar (emblematic of a successful campaign to the Cedar Forest), requires an obstacle. One must prove

¹⁵² Cf. Klein & Abraham 2000:65-66.

¹⁵³ Cf. Edzard 1993:9-10. Also see Michalowski's (1986) study on mental maps in Mesopotamian tradition.

oneself worthy of attaining this divine sanction for hegemony over a vast territory by overcoming a trial. This is one way of potentially explaining the monstrous nature of Humbaba within the tradition,

'My lord, you have not set eyes on that fellow (Huwawa), your heart is not yet stricken, but I have set eyes on him, my heart is stricken:
a warrior he is, his teeth of a dragon,
his eye the eye of a lion!
(*GH A*, 97-100)¹⁵⁴

Such a ferocious opponent would naturally scare off those who are not worthy of the deed, something that the tradition engages with at various junctures.¹⁵⁵ This motif of a monstrous guardian is not unfamiliar even in the Greek canon, one only has to consider the eleventh labour of Herakles or Jason and the Golden Fleece.¹⁵⁶

Therefore, it is possible to limit the analysis of Humbaba to this point. His monstrous and animalistic nature is a familiar trope of guardian beasts. This is a significant point. Despite what I will go on to argue in the rest of this section, it should not be forgotten that for many Humbaba would have been nothing other than a monstrous and bestial guardian.

However, Humbaba is not a conventional guardian and is certainly not simply a beast. One should consider his awesome and monstrous nature in much more human terms. Instead of viewing Humbaba as simply a monster to be overcome, we can understand the monstrous attributes and awesome power of Humbaba with reference to the power of supreme kingship. Consider how Humbaba's forceful nature is detailed,

¹⁵⁴ Edzard 1991:200; George 1999:154; Fleming & Milstein 2010:186.

¹⁵⁵ For examples see: Enkidu's initial dread at the proposal of the expedition (*SB Epic*, ii.216-229; George 2003:566-567); Enkidu's fear and desire to flee after being initially overcome by Huwawa's auras (*GH A*, 95-119; George 1999:154-155; Fleming & Milstein 2010:186-187; Edzard 1991:198-206); Gilgamesh's fear as a result of the prophetic dreams and Enkidu's fear at the prospect of facing Huwawa (*OB Schoyen2*; George 2003:232-239); Gilgamesh's fear and need for encouragement and inspiration by Enki via Enkidu (*GH B*, 78-104; Edzard 1993:25-28; George 1999:164-165; Fleming & Milstein 2010:198-199); Gilgamesh's fear when faced with Humbaba (*SB Epic*, v.95-107; George 2003:606-607).

¹⁵⁶ Herakles' eleventh labour (Apollodorus, *the Library* II.5.11); Jason and the Golden Fleece (Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* III.400ff). Both narratives have beasts, giants and trials between the protagonists, and powerful and sacred objects.

^d*hum-ba-ba rig-ma-šú a-bu-bu*
pi-i-šu ^d*girru(gíra)-um-ma na-pi-is-su mu-ú-tu*
i-šem-me-e-ma a-na 60+šu bēr(danna) ri-ma-at ^{giš}*qišti(tir)*
a-ri-du ^{giš}*qišti(tir)-šu i-šab-bat-su lu-u'-t]u*

'Humbaba, his voice is the Deluge,
 his speech is fire, his breath is death.
 He hears the forest's murmur for sixty leagues;
 He who ventures into his forest, [feebleness will seize him!]
 (*SB Epic*, ii.291-294)¹⁵⁷

Here Humbaba is described as something awesome and elemental, perhaps even super-human. This is something that can be directly paralleled with the descriptions of royal power from the First Millennium BCE.¹⁵⁸ A pertinent example of this is Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon. The Neo-Assyrian king describes his attack on the city as that of a storm, whilst his successor, Esarhaddon, depersonalises the same action and describes it as an act of the gods '*tamsil abubi*' 'like the Deluge'.¹⁵⁹ The ideology presents the great king as an unstoppable force of nature imbued with elemental powers, irresistible and unchallengeable. The parallel with the description of Humbaba is self-evident.

The resultant effect that these great kings had on their enemies was to inspire dread resulting in flight or a sort of psychological paralysis. Sennacherib again provides the example with the debilitating effect he is presented as having upon his enemies in his Annals,

^m*lu-li-i šār* ^{uru}*ši-du-un-ni pul-ḫi me-lam-me be-lu-ti-ia is-ḫu-pu-šu-ma a-na ru-uq-qí qa-bal*
tam-tim in-na-bit-ma šad-da-šú e-mid,

'Lulê, king of Sidon, the terrifying splendour (lit. terrors of splendours) of my sovereignty overcame him and far off into the midst of the sea he fled. (There) he died.'
 (*Annals* ii.38-40)¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ George 2003:570-571.

¹⁵⁸ Before advancing, it is useful to explain that this awesome and elemental power does not deify the king, but is emblematic of divine support and the king's special relationship with the gods. Consider how kings state that it is by the will/grace of the gods that they achieve such heights, for example, *Esarhaddon* 79, 11-13 (Leichty 2011:161); *Behistun Inscription*, DB i.5 (Kuhrt 2007:141)

¹⁵⁹ Sennacherib: *Bavian Inscription* 43-44; Luckenbill 1924:83; Jacobsen & Lloyd 1935:23-27; Esarhaddon: *Babylon D* i.7-ii.11; Leichty 2011:231-236; cf. BM 134465 ii.10-15, where Esarhaddon's destruction of Sidon is compared to that of a flood (Leichty 2011:48).

¹⁶⁰ Luckenbill 1924:29; Grayson & Novotny 2012:175.

Thus the mighty king is described as imbued with special powers embodying his royal splendour in the form of terrors to the enemy. Gilgamesh's own splendour has a comparable effect upon the army of Akka in the Sumerian poem, *the envoys of Akka*.¹⁶¹ This is likewise the effect that Humbaba is credited with having upon our protagonists when he is approached and appears to Gilgamesh and Enkidu.¹⁶²

This clarification re-positions Humbaba at the outset of the episode as the hegemonic king. He who rules as 'great king', 'king of kings', 'king of foreign lands', 'king of all countries', 'king of the four quarters' is imbued with fearsome royal power. The idea is that despite the individual peculiarities of each title, all express dominion over a vast region of subordinate kingdoms, just as the expression 'from the Upper to the Lower Sea' does. This hegemony over a vast region imbues the 'Great King' with stature, power, even essence that the subordinates cannot match or resist, hence his hegemony.¹⁶³ Any attempt to definitively distinguish between a more human Huwawa in the Sumerian poems and a more monstrous Humbaba in the Akkadian Epics should therefore be avoided as an oversimplification.¹⁶⁴ As I will demonstrate from the descriptions across the narrative tradition it is consistently and almost universally apparent that Humbaba/Huwawa's terrible attributes are those awesome splendours of the hegemonic king.

With such formidable weapons at his disposal, it would appear tantamount to suicide to challenge such an awesome force. However, Humbaba is faced in the Gilgamesh tradition and this is achieved successfully by the meeting of three criteria: firstly, the challenger must prevent Humbaba from utilising his royal power,

¹⁶¹ *The envoys of Akka*, 70-106 (George 1999:147-148).

¹⁶² For examples, Gilgamesh and Enkidu are incapacitated when first struck by Humbaba's auras: *GH A*, 66-85 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:185-186; Edzard 1991:190-195); *GH B*, 66-78 (Edzard 1993:24-25; Fleming & Milstein 2010:198); MB Ug₂ fragment a (RS 94.2191; George 2007b:248-249; Arnaud 2007:134-135, no.43); the dreadful descriptions of Humbaba: *GH A*, 99-102 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:186; Edzard 1991:200-201); *SB Epic*, ii.291-294 (George 2003:570-571); Gilgamesh's trepidation upon entering the Cedar Forest: *SB v*.27-46 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:76-79); and the paralysis that overcomes Gilgamesh when first faced with Humbaba: *GH A*, 126-135 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:187; Edzard 1991:208-210); *SB v*.95-107 (George 2003:606-607).

¹⁶³ For examples of these and similar titles/dominions being rendered, see Neo-Assyrian cylinder fragments from Nimrud, *Esarhaddon 79*, 1-13 (Leichty 2011:161); *Cyrus Cylinder* 20-22; 27-31 (Kuhrt 2007:71-72); BM 36277 i.1-2; ii.17-18 (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991:75-77).

¹⁶⁴ E.g. Fleming & Milstein 2010:56-59; Graff 2012:78.

or must at least obtain comparable power; secondly, the challenger must have a god on their side; and finally, one must not venture against Humbaba alone, two will succeed where one may fail.

3.2.4.1 The first of the criteria for challenging Humbaba

The first of the criteria is met in various ways within the tradition. In the Sumerian poems it is through negotiation. Huwawa is prevented from utilising his auras against Gilgamesh as he is convinced to surrender them in advance of the contest in return for a series of gifts offered by our protagonist. This is complemented by Gilgamesh's acquisition of comparable power from the sun god, Utu. The exchange of gifts will be returned to below, but the acquisition of comparable power can be discussed further here. At the outset of the expedition, Utu provides Gilgamesh with seven warriors to aid his campaign,

'Warriors, sons of one mother – they were seven.
The first, their eldest brother, had a lion's paws, an eagle's claws.
The second, a ... –serpent, had a mouth ...
The third, a dragon-serpent, a serpent ...
The fourth would roast with fire ...
The fifth, a prime serpent, ... in the hill country.
The sixth would lash the chest like a raging flood.
The seventh would blaze like lightning (that) no man could turn back.
These seven the warrior, valiant Utu, gave to Gilgamesh.'
(*GH A*, 36-44)¹⁶⁵

These seven warriors can be understood to represent constellations mapping the path to the Cedar Forest.¹⁶⁶ However, it is possible to view them as more than just celestial guides. It appears evident that Utu is assigning Gilgamesh the Sebittu, the seven warrior gods.¹⁶⁷ As the Sebittu, these warriors may be seen not only to guide Gilgamesh, but also as agents of his campaign. In Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions the Sebittu go before the king on campaign, opening the path to battle, and so

¹⁶⁵ Fleming & Milstein 2010:184 (cf. George 1999:151-152; Edzard 1991:179-181).

¹⁶⁶ Fleming & Milstein 2010:84. This is supported by the narrative assigning them this role (*GH A*, 45; Fleming & Milstein 2010:184; Edzard 1991:182), and by it being more overtly stated in *GH B*, 37-50 (Edzard 1993:20-21; Fleming & Milstein 2010:197).

¹⁶⁷ For Sebittu, see Graziani 1979; Wiggermann 2010.

harmonising the roles of guide and warrior.¹⁶⁸ This is not a unique conceptualisation, as we see them operate with a similar martial functionality for the heroic and royal model of Nergal. In *Erra and Ishum* (*esp. i.6-99*), the Sebittu accompany the warrior, Erra (Nergal), on campaign and act as his weapons.¹⁶⁹ Although both of these examples date from the First Millennium BCE, it is not unreasonable to consider the Sebittu acting with parallel function in earlier narrative. Note that the Sumerian word used to describe the Sebittu in *GH A*, 'ur-saĝ' equivalent to the Akkadian 'qarrādu' may be rendered 'hero', but is more conventionally 'warrior', and both translations imply martial activity.¹⁷⁰ Further, Gilgamesh is being gifted them in advance of setting out on campaign against Huwawa, making this understanding sensible. The Sebittu are more prominent in the extant evidence from the First Millennium BCE, where they appear to have become more significant deities under the Neo-Assyrians. However, their existence and cult is evident intermittently from the Neo-Sumerian period onwards.¹⁷¹ This is when the Sumerian Gilgamesh poems were likely written down (perhaps even composed), and so the Sebittu are perfectly placed to appear in this narrative.

With such warriors in the van, one might expect that the great king would never see conflict, but battles commence and cities are sacked. It is here that the Sebittu are most clearly presented as aspects of the king's sovereignty. As with Nergal, the Sebittu are the weapons of the king, and he attacks with their elemental and theriomorphic attributes. It appears that we are once again dealing with a conceptualisation of the king's radiance or terrors. We have already seen kings presented as having powers of destruction comparable to that of a storm and flood, and it is evident that these other natural and animalistic attributes were also co-opted when representing supreme royal power. Consider how Esarhaddon is described going into battle like lion, eagle, flood, and storm.¹⁷² Another interesting

¹⁶⁸ For examples, see the *Iran Stele* (text 35, line 12) and *Mila Mergi Rock Relief* (text 37, line 9) of Tiglath-pileser III (Tadmor & Yamada 2011:83; 90).

¹⁶⁹ Cagni 1969:58-129; Dalley 2000:282-315; Foster 2005:880-911.

¹⁷⁰ Edzard 1991:179.

¹⁷¹ Wiggermann 2010.

¹⁷² *Esarhaddon 8*, ii.5-19 (Leichty 2011:53-54); cf. BM 134465, i.1-15 where Esarhaddon is compared to both the lion and the eagle (Leichty 2011:47).

example is a fragmentary passage from Nimrud from the annals of Tiglath-pileser III. Although damaged, it appears to reference the hegemony of the king over other nations, supplication of subject kings, and animalistic attributes constituting a lion-dragon hybrid.¹⁷³ Shalmaneser III is given the title '*úšúmgallu*' meaning 'great dragon, snake'.¹⁷⁴ Again this is not a uniquely First Millennium BCE phenomenon.

The Neo-Sumerian king, Shulgi, is elevated to ruler of the people, surpassing all others by his patron god Enlil who embodies the fearsome attributes of storm, flood, and serpent.¹⁷⁵ Further, in Old Babylonian legends of the kings of Akkad, Naram-Sin is described with attributes of fire, storm, lion, viper, and Anzû bird, and Sargon is likened to a raging lion and addresses campaigning to the Cedar Forest with Shamash's aid.¹⁷⁶ All of this makes it quite clear that there are strong parallels between the attributes of the Sebittu and the Mesopotamian monarch's power. Therefore, the Sebittu like other patron deities, enable the king to achieve great deeds by supporting or acting through him, rather than performing them explicitly on behalf of the king.¹⁷⁷ The king acts with their awesome attributes. This explains why once they are gifted it is Gilgamesh who takes the fore, not the seven accompanying warriors.

It is then interesting that the descriptions of these gifts of Utu (the Sebittu) can be paralleled with the attributes of Huwawa within the tradition. As we have seen, Huwawa is described with the characteristics of lion, dragon, fire and flood. Therefore, it is possible to consider that Huwawa's awesome powers were also gifts from Utu.¹⁷⁸ If considered as such, this would position Huwawa as a recipient of divine royal patronage and further strengthen his royal identity. Huwawa's auras,

¹⁷³ Text 3; NA 9/76 (Tadmor & Yamada 2011:24).

¹⁷⁴ A.O.102.25 (Grayson 1996:98).

¹⁷⁵ Frayne 1997:156-157.

¹⁷⁶ *Naram-Sin and the Lord of Apishal* v.1-3; *Sargon, the Lion* rev. 6-20 (Westenholz 1997:98-101; 182-183).

¹⁷⁷ Examples referencing the Sebittu with a singular pronoun (e.g. in *Erra and Ishum* i.26-27; Cagni 1969:60-61; Dalley 2000:286; 313; Foster 2005:882) perhaps further supports this idea of their channelling or funnelling through a singular agent.

¹⁷⁸ Note Huwawa makes reference to patronage that he had previously received from Utu (*GH A* 153-158; Edzard 1991:222).

that make him so fearsome and undefeatable, can be viewed as the same terrors of sovereignty utilised by the Mesopotamian great kings. Furthermore, Huwawa is already in possession of this divine patronage at the time of Gilgamesh's proposal of the expedition and therefore may be viewed as the incumbent hegemonic king. Thus, Gilgamesh must act as he does and seek Utu's support, so that comparable power is bestowed upon him. For it seems without this, a campaign against Huwawa would not even be possible.

Compare this with the circumstances presented in the Akkadian Gilgamesh epics. Unfortunately, much of the comparable material is currently lost, but certain differences may be gleaned from the fragments that do exist. It does not appear that the Sebittu are gifted to Gilgamesh in these contextualisations of the episode. Instead, Shamash aids Gilgamesh with the thirteen winds.¹⁷⁹ Part of the reason for this difference may be the mutation of Enkidu in the Akkadian epics. No longer simply an attendant of the king, Enkidu now has his own wild, heroic background with a creation story of divine purpose. Enkidu now serves as Gilgamesh's guide, replacing that function previously held by the Sebittu, as well as increasing his martial prowess, as we now have two formidable protagonists in the field.¹⁸⁰

Although the Sebittu appear to have been replaced as agents of Gilgamesh in the *SB Epic*, Humbaba may be considered to still possess them. This is potentially alluded to in an OB fragment, when it is stated by Enkidu that Humbaba's auras were escaping into the forest and later in the same passage Gilgamesh is said to have slain all seven.¹⁸¹ Thus, we are presented with a morphology of the auras that presents seven forms that were able to be slain, plausibly our elemental and

¹⁷⁹ *SB Epic*, iii.87-93; v.137-143; George 2003:578-579; 608-609.

¹⁸⁰ For these changes in Enkidu, see *SB Epic* I-III and OB II & III (George 2003:172-207; 538-585); for discussions of this evolution of Enkidu (Tigay 1982:192-213; George 2003:140-144; Fleming & Milstein 2010:19-42). For now, it will have to suffice to notice these changes. A detailed discussion of Enkidu will follow in chapter five. It should be noted in relation to guiding the way to the Cedar Forest, Enkidu has not completely usurped the role. Shamash is still required to open the way for the campaign, but it is simply expressed as a will of the god rather than an action of his agents, e.g. Ninsun's request that Shamash assist Gilgamesh in his journey and his battle (*SB Epic*, iii.35-116; George 2003:576-581), and the elders of Uruk outline Shamash's role in assisting the campaign as guide and fellow combatant (OB III.257-271; George 2003:204-207).

¹⁸¹ OB Ishchali, rev.19-35; George 2003:262-265.

theriomorphic warriors. When this is compared with the details on Humbaba's seven provided by the MS ff, continuity and change is more evident. The seven are referred to as Humbaba's sons, *mārē(dumu)^{meš}-šú*, giving them a familiar anthropomorphism. MS ff then appears to go on to name them with titles akin to winds.¹⁸² Thus once again the attributes of Gilgamesh and Humbaba exhibit parallelism. However, here there is a notable difference in that Humbaba's supporting warrior winds number only seven, whilst in support of Gilgamesh Shamash unleashes thirteen. This may be emblematic of the superior strength of a king who enjoys the continued patronage of Shamash and is aided by him in the field.

There are further aspects of the narrative tradition that point to this episode being a contest between royal figures. The dialogue and negotiations between Gilgamesh and Huwawa in the Sumerian poems help engender a reading imbued with royal symbolism. It is possible to read their initial interactions in *GH A* as a reception scene. Alster has detailed how the bowing down by Gilgamesh when confronted with Huwawa is comparable with court protocol when a visitor is received in a

¹⁸² MSff v.307-308 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:82-84). Al-Rawi and George (2014:74-75) identify a parallel for this motif of Humbaba and his seven sons with the myth of Enmešarra and his sons. The myth of Enmešarra is difficult to confidently reconstruct. However, Enmešarra appears to have been an ancestral supreme deity who was usurped and his sons were slain by Enlil (or Marduk), via the agency of Ninurta. Therefore, it appears that we are also dealing with a changing of the guard in the Enmešarra myth, as the old order is replaced by the new (Pinches 1908:53-62; 77-85; Thureau-Dangin 1919:146-156; Lewy & Lewy 1942-1943:25-47; Nougayrol 1947:30-32; Civil 1974/1977; Black & Green 1992:76-77; Lambert 2013:213-216; 281-298; 326-329). More clearly, the connection with the Enmešarra myth further strengthens the case for a wider understanding that this episode in the Gilgamesh tradition represents a battle for power between two rivals for supreme dominion. This very ready parallel further exemplifies the continuing intertextuality in cuneiform narrative, but this identification should not encourage us to sever the Sebittu connection. The presence of *mārēšú* in MS ff (cf. OB Ishchali, rev. 35, where neither the familial relationship nor the blustery titles are provided) may have been employed by an author or authors as a further layer of intertextualisation to encourage a reading of the Gilgamesh episode in parallel with the myth of Enmešarra (as suggested by Al-Rawi & George). However, this is not an exclusive or preclusive connection. It should be noted that in an extant version of the Enmešarra myth, it is stated that after his defeat, all of Enmešarra's attributes were bestowed upon Shamash (*Enmešarra's Defeat*, obvs. ii.28-29; Lambert 2013:281; 292-293). Thus, the terrifying splendours of Shamash that are bestowed upon earthly kings may have originally been attributes of Enmešarra, potentially further linking the Sebittu and Enmešarra's sons (cf. Lewy & Lewy 1942-43:37-39, who also connect the seven sons of Enmešarra with the Sebittu).

foreign court.¹⁸³ Further, the various gifts offered by Gilgamesh to entice reciprocal behaviour from Huwawa paint a familiar diplomatic picture.¹⁸⁴ All that Gilgamesh offers is given in an effort to receive in return Huwawa's auras or, as we have begun to consider, aspects of his royal power. Conspicuously, in one such offer Gilgamesh offers two of his sisters to Huwawa in marriage,

“let me bring you my older sister Enmebaragesi as a senior wife in the highlands...
Let me bring you my younger sister Ma-tur as a junior wife in the highlands.
Exchange with me one of your fears, so I may enter among your kin.”
(*GH A*, 139-144)¹⁸⁵

The offer of sororate marriage is the only gift cited in many of the extant narratives.¹⁸⁶ However, some fragments of unknown origin do provide the expanded list between lines 148 and 149 in *GH A*. It is therefore debateable whether the omission of the other gifts was deliberate exclusion by authors of the relevant manuscripts or simply shorthand with the list to be inferred.¹⁸⁷ Shaffer and Alster have both identified socio-cultural and even political parallels in Mesopotamian culture for the quoted action. The former draws comparisons with the practice of sororate marriage in early Mesopotamian history, whilst the latter concludes that the marriages should be considered more in line with political intermarriage, forging bonds between powerful, ruling figures.¹⁸⁸ I do not see why one must necessarily preclude the other. It is possible that the practice can exist

¹⁸³ Alster 1992a:5-6; cf. Michalowski (2003:205-206) who argues that here Huwawa represents a satirizing of the Neo-Sumerians' eastern neighbours, the Elamites.

¹⁸⁴ Alster 1992a; *GH A*, 121-151 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:187-188; George 1999:155-158; Edzard 1991:206-218). This mythologizing of a reception scene with emphasis upon the monstrous attributes of the host again should not be unfamiliar to those who have read Homer, where the episode in book IX of the *Odyssey* between Odysseus and Polyphemos offers a ready parallel. See Reece (1993:123-143) for a recent interpretation of this Homeric episode as a hospitality scene.

¹⁸⁵ Fleming & Milstein 2010:187-188 (cf. Edzard 1991:211-213; George 1999:155-156). See Michalowski (2003:198-199) for a discussion of the name Peshtur and its variant Ma-tur, as well as a potential identification of Gilgamesh's younger sister with a genuine princess from the Ur III court. The name of Gilgamesh's other sister, Enmebaragesi, will be discussed further below.

¹⁸⁶ Alster 1992a.

¹⁸⁷ Edzard 1991:214-217; Fleming & Milstein 2010:182-183; 193; cf. George 1999:155-158 and Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:110-113 for the expanded list of gifts and the rendering of the second wife in the role of concubine and with the name Peshtur. See Taylor (2010:357-360) for a discussion of the symbolic significance of each gift in the expanded list.

¹⁸⁸ Shaffer (1983:310-313) discusses the practice of sisters marrying the same man in the OB period and the various possible connotations presented by such as an arrangement, e.g. a wife with a religious role and a wife with a procreative function. Alster (1992:5-8) views the whole reception and gift-giving scene as one of Gilgamesh in a foreign (Huwawa's) court forming political and familial alliances.

both as a social convention and as a royal/elite practice. In this way, the scene is accessible to both the royal and the general reading, as is much of the tradition. However, it is the political or royal marriage interpretation that I wish to discuss further.

Alster seems to perceive Huwawa as the inferior figure, who is enticed by the offer of marriage into Uruk's ruling family and the social elevation it will bring.¹⁸⁹ This is not a view I share. Huwawa's marrying into Gilgamesh's family does not necessarily give Gilgamesh political primacy. Consider that any wife taken by the 'king of kings' would come from a politically inferior family, but the marriage may still appear useful when consolidating one's position or expanding one's territory. It seems clear that the entire scene serves to emphasise Huwawa's initial position of superiority and power. It is true that Gilgamesh's offer would only be appealing if it offered something to the recipient, but that should be viewed in terms of an alliance with the powerful Gilgamesh in the inferior position. Gilgamesh's own actions support this interpretation,

'Into his muscles, into his feet, fear poured in, (Huwawa's) terror poured in.
He could not budge his foot from the ground,
the foot – his big toe dragged the foot,
into his side, into his ..., it poured.
"Supple with oil, lasting offshoot,
native son, splendour of the gods,
stout ox, in fighting stance-
your mother knew just how to form a child,
your wet nurse knew just how to feed a child on her lap.
Do not be afraid, place your hands on the ground,"
He placed his hands on the ground, he spoke to him:'
(*GH A*, 126-136)¹⁹⁰

and...

¹⁸⁹ Alster 1992a:7-8. This position may be supported, as Alster states, by the references to Huwawa's obscure parentage in comparison to Gilgamesh's own noble lineage.

¹⁹⁰ Fleming & Milstein 2010:187; cf. George 1999:155; Edzard 1991:208-210. The speech in the quoted passage is often inferred as to be that of Huwawa, but George (2003:10) does well to highlight the ambiguity. It is possible to consider it as encouragement and guidance from Enkidu rather than instruction from Huwawa (Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:110). This re-positioning may better explain the complimentary tone of the initial lines of dialogue and is readily paralleled with Enkidu's words to Gilgamesh later in the poem (*GH A*, 163-169; George 1999:159; Edzard 1991:224-225).

'After the seventh terror was gone, (Gilgamesh) attacked his abode.
He followed him like a snake on the wine- ...
and feigning a kiss, he struck him on the cheek with open hand.'
(*GH A*, 149-151)¹⁹¹

In the first passage, Gilgamesh prostrates himself before a superior opponent. This superiority is perceived simply through action of prostrating, but also through Gilgamesh's fear and attempts to passively negotiate with Huwawa instead of instantly joining combat. It appears to the viewing audience that Gilgamesh has accepted his status as subservient to the powerful adversary.¹⁹² It is then possible to consider this as a sign of surrender and emblematic of accepting defeat. An intentionally belligerent Gilgamesh campaigns to the Cedar Forest to confront Huwawa, but after initially being stunned and then when finding himself face-to-face with his adversary, opts for prostration and submission.¹⁹³ Therefore, it is possible to consider this action as emblematic of a royal court scene and a battlefield submission, both representing audiences with the king.

It is only when Gilgamesh has relieved Huwawa of his aspects of supreme royal power, and acquired them for himself, that his approach changes to combative. Even then, it is initially approached through the deception of feigning a kiss. This action both continues to signal Gilgamesh's perceived inferiority, as well as being emblematic of his elevation in status since the interaction began. The exchange has advanced Gilgamesh from a figure that must prostrate to one who is afforded the honour of kissing the hegemonic king. Naturally, someone who is afforded the honour of kissing the king is more familiar and elevated than he who must prostrate. One may even argue that Gilgamesh has been elevated from a position of

¹⁹¹ Fleming & Milstein 2010:188; cf. George 1999:158; Edzard 1991:217-218.

¹⁹² The act of prostrating to a Mesopotamian monarch is familiar from the imagery and text of the Neo-Assyrian period, notably by a foreign supplicant or defeated/fearful enemy. It has been suggested that this is restricted to the initial contact between an Assyrian king and non-Assyrian rulers, or after the suppression of a non-Assyrian rebellion by the Assyrian king. For examples, consider a scene from the Balawat Gates of Shalmeneser III (Fig.1.3; Cifarelli 1998:218; Ataç 2006:75; 92); cf. the scenes of surrender to Sennacherib at Lachish (Barnett 1976:plate IV; Fig.2); and a narrative recounting of parallel action during Esarhaddon's conquest of Egypt, where the defeated bow down at the victors feet (*Esarhaddon 8*, i.1-4; Leichty 2011:52).

¹⁹³ It should be noted here that Gilgamesh's action is described as '*šu ki-a*', which is literally, 'hands on the ground' (Edzard 1991:210). Therefore, we may be looking at an action slightly short of full prostration, but surely still viewed to be respectful and submissive.

foreign supplicant to that of an ally or even kinsman by converting from one action to the other.¹⁹⁴ Of course, the agreed matrimonial alliance is enough to explain the rapid elevation in status.

The exact degree of familiarity between Huwawa and Gilgamesh or elevation of Gilgamesh, can only be fully established if further details of the kiss gesture are discovered, i.e. whether it is a physical kiss on the person of Huwawa that is feigned or a gestured kiss slightly removed. Considering that Gilgamesh feigns to kiss and then strikes Huwawa with his hand, it is entirely plausible that the gesture being described is the 'bowed kiss' familiar from later imagery.¹⁹⁵ It is possible that this 'bowed kiss' was an intermediary between prostration and kissing the king's person. It seems to demonstrate an elevation in status for the doer, but restricts physical contact with the king's person to an elite few. It has been argued that the Persian royal audience scenes are a refinement of their Neo-Assyrian counterparts. This is understood as an attempt by the Persians to tap into pre-existing images of power, whilst establishing their own model of authority. This was a common practice for Mesopotamian monarchs. It is then possible to consider that certain social and court protocols were also adopted and refined, and further that the Neo-Assyrian models may have been based on pre-existing presentations of power in Mesopotamia.¹⁹⁶ Comparable Neo-Assyrian iconography does exist. For example, see the battlefield surrender at Lachish, where an Assyrian official is depicted before the king with an open hand raised before his mouth.¹⁹⁷ This may represent some sort of kiss protocol, or simply an open-hand gesture of reverence. This scene offers a range of gestures of supplication from full prostration, through a two-

¹⁹⁴ As seen in a slightly romanticised Achaemenid period example, the kissing of the king's physical person was understood to indicate social and political status (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.4.27-28). This honour was reserved for 'kinsmen' or 'Friends' of the king, although as in this passage, could be extended to others to signify an elevation to parallel status (cf. HDT 1.134, where the range of greetings in Persian culture from kissing to prostration are expressed in relation to social status). See Bowden (2013) for a detailed discussion concerning the continuity of understanding and the various possible connotations of prostrating before or kissing the king in the Persian, Greek, Macedonian and Roman spheres.

¹⁹⁵ The 'bowed kiss' is familiar from Achaemenid royal audience scene iconography (Fig.3; Root 1979:88-95, plate XVII; Allen 2005a:41-42).

¹⁹⁶ Allen 2005a:44.

¹⁹⁷ Barnett 1976:pl.iv; Fig.2.

handed, open-palm gesture, to the one-handed, open-palm gesture. Whichever gesture is employed by the supplicant, a social and political hierarchy appears clear from the image alone.

The social and political protocol subtleties such as those seen in the Neo-Assyrian and Persian evidence may not have been as refined during the Neo-Sumerian and OB periods, but there are examples right through BCE Mesopotamian culture that may demonstrate the presence of similar protocol before a ruler.¹⁹⁸ These seem to be indicative of a degree of continuity in understanding, despite the subtle changes. Further, figures 5 and 6 are interesting and unstable examples, but potentially highly instructive. In figure 5, Naram-Sin seems to occupy a murky territory between the mortal and divine. It is also not clear whether all of the defeated Lullubi are gesturing towards the king of Akkad, or whether some are gesturing to the solar discs above and so the sun god. In figure 6, Hammurabi makes the gesture to an enthroned Shamash, therefore making it sensible that this gesture should be considered as one of divine worship here. However, it cannot be escaped that the god is presented in a familiar royal enthronement setting making a conclusion of divine exclusivity for the gesture untenable. These early examples appear to shed light upon the gestures of reverence offered towards the king and their parallel with the divine. The king, as the mortal agent and representative of Shamash, receives the honour and reverence due to the sun god, as earthly kingship models itself on the divine. Note how the king was considered to be the sun of his kingdom in the Old Babylonian period and beyond.¹⁹⁹

It would then seem from the discussion above that the exact position or familiarity of the doer of a gesture with its recipient was not always clear, except that the doer was maintained in the inferior position. Thus, it seems clear that we are dealing

¹⁹⁸ For examples, see: a Late Uruk period seal for the familiar two-handed, open-palm gesture by either a defeated enemy or an official in a scene presenting war captives before a ruler (Suter 2013:212-213; Fig.4); an Old Akkadian stele of Naram-Sin with a defeated Lullubi figure, likely to be the ruler, making a two-handed, open-palm gesture to the imposing Naram-Sin (Bienkowski & Millard 2000:206-207; Fig.5); and an Old Babylonian stele of Hammurabi's where the Babylonian king is depicted with a one-handed, open-palm gesture before the enthroned Shamash (Price 1904:471; Fig.6).

¹⁹⁹ Charpin 2013.

with an audience scene in *GH A* with Gilgamesh clearly initially inferior. However, by the end of the episode the superiority has been reversed. The transfer of royal power and the reversal of roles can be understood clearly through two actions. Firstly, the aforementioned arrangement of the marriage of Huwawa to Gilgamesh's sisters gives Gilgamesh access and claim to Huwawa's royal position. The fact that it is sisters and not daughters being offered in marriage actually provides our protagonist and antagonist with a degree of equality rather than providing one with the superiority of civil fatherhood over the other, further exemplifying the movement towards parity. The second is the cost or brideprice requested and received for the marriages and other gifts, namely Huwawa's auras. With the aspects of royal power in possession and the agreed upon melding of the two ruling figures' houses through matrimonial alliance, Gilgamesh can now be viewed to have acquired Huwawa's royal power. Thus, he is now ready and able to challenge the latter's position openly. Dispossessed of his powers, Huwawa is now easily defeated and takes on the role of the inferior, prostrating in front of the now superior Gilgamesh.²⁰⁰ It is startling here how easily the previously monstrous Huwawa is defeated. The conclusion seems to be that having divested his protective auras, Huwawa has also stripped away his monstrosity.²⁰¹ Thus, leaving the man devoid of the powers of royal office and easily subdued.

This understanding is supported by a further conceptualisation of Humbaba's auras. We have already seen them conceptualised as warriors, and below they will be shown to have been conceptualised as the cedars themselves, but they were also presented as items of clothing within the tradition. This provides us with the perception that Humbaba's powers somehow resided in his vestments.²⁰² This has a

²⁰⁰ *GH A*, 153-158 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:188-189; cf. George 1999:159; Edzard 1991:219-222).

²⁰¹ Cf. *SB Epic* v.267 (George 2003:612-613) where tusks are harvested from the head of Humbaba as booty. It appears that at least some of his animalistic attributes are maintained in this contextualisation.

²⁰² See MS ff v.99-100 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:80-81), where Gilgamesh is warned to not let Humbaba wrap himself in his seven cloaks of radiance, 7 ^{túg} *naḥlapāti*(gú.[è])[^{meš} -šu šá nam-ri-ri]. Shaffer (1983:308-310) presents Sumerian variants where Huwawa is said to don his auras like a garment and headdress. Alster (1992a:6-7) has noticed a parallel for these Sumerian variants with Inanna's descent into the underworld. Here the goddess is convinced to remove her clothing and adornments surrendering her divine protection. Note that these are the seven divine powers that Inanna has taken for her campaign into the underworld, conceptualised as clothing, which may be

ready parallel in Mesopotamian kingship ideology. That the power and office of the kingship resided in the royal vestments and trappings, is clearly understood in a Mesopotamian context.²⁰³ It is then possible to consider an understanding within some versions of the Sumerian poems, where as each aura is bartered for and exchanged we are being presented with the emblematic disrobing of royal garments and adornments by Huwawa and their surrender to Gilgamesh. Despite the apparent absence of any such trading between our protagonist and antagonist in the *SB Epic*, the symbolism and ideology of the power imbued vestments is maintained when Gilgamesh is warned not to let Humbaba don his seven cloaks,

iš-iš re-ši-šu ^dGIŠ-gím-[maš ana pa-an ^dšamaš(utu) i-bak-ki]
 ana pa-an šá-ru-ri šá ^dšamaš(utu) i[l-la-ka di-ma-a-šú]
 an-nu-ú u₄-mu ^dšamaš(utu) šá at-ka-lak-[ku e tam-ši?]
 e-nin-na-ma i-ziz-za-am-m[a . . .]
 eli(ugu) ^dGIŠ-gím-maš per'u(nunuz) šá [lîb-bi uruk^{ki} šil-la-ka šu-kun]
^dšamaš(utu) iš-ma-a zi-kir [pi-i-šú]
 ul-tu ul-la-nu-um-ma t[uk-ku ul-tu šamê(an)^e il-ta-na-sa-áš-šú]
 e tap-làḫ i-ziz-za-áš-šú la [ir-ru-ub ana šub-ti-šú]
 la ur-rad a-na ḫal-bi-im-ma [la . . .]
 la-am iḫ-ḫal-pu 7 ^{túg}naḫlapāti(gu.[è])[^{meš}-šu šá nam-ri-ri]
 1-et ḫa-lip 6 šá-ḫi-iṭ :
 š[u-nu]
 ki-ma ri-me kad-ri i[t-ku-pu . . .]
 [i]t-til-ti is-si-m[a ma-li pi-rit-ta]

Gilgameš lifted up his head, [weeping before Šamaš,
 [his tears] flowing before the rays of the sun.
 “[Do not forget] that day, O Šamaš, that I placed my trust in you!
 Now come to my aid and [.]
 Upon Gilgameš, scion from Uruk’s midst, [place your protection!]”

taken off and surrendered (*Inanna’s Descent*, 102-122; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:68-69).

²⁰³ Consider the Substitute King Ritual. In times of peril for the king, a substitute puts on the robes and adornments of the king, sits on the throne, and in appearance takes on the office of kingship. A ritual is then carried out where the substitute takes responsibility for the actions of the king that had caused the bad omens and pays the price with his life (Lambert 1957-1958; 1959-1960; Parpola 1983b:xxii-xxxii). This ritual demonstrates that the office lies in the regalia, something that we will come back to in the subsequent chapters. This ritual is evident in the Neo-Assyrian period with Esarhaddon, and tradition has it occurring in OB period with the narrative of the succession of Enlil-bani (Labat 1945-1946; Glassner 2004:268-275). Even if the tale of Enlil-bani’s succession is apocryphal, its identification and association with kings from the relevant periods in later understanding is maintained. Note that on one of the three tablets detailing Enlil-bani’s accession (no.39; Glassner 2004:268-271) the kings of Akkad are followed by the Neo-Sumerian king, Shulgi, who is in turn followed by the tale of Enlil-bani. Further, the myth of Inanna’s descent and the variations which have Humbaba’s auras as vestments, indicate a continuity of understanding regarding power imbued vestments in ancient Mesopotamia.

Šamaš heard what [he] had spoken,
 straight away a voice [cried to him from the heavens:]
 "Fear not, stand against him! He must not [enter his dwelling,]
 he must not go into the grove, he must not [. . . ,]
 before he has wrapped himself in his seven cloaks [of radiance!]
 One he is wrapped in, six he has divested."
 They [. ,]
 like a fierce wild bull, ready to charge [. . .]
 He bellowed once, and it was (a bellow) full of terror,
 (SB Epic, v.90-103)²⁰⁴

This passage is fascinating, as it is not exactly clear what is happening due to the fragmentary state of the manuscripts. It appears that once in the Cedar Forest, a trepidatious Gilgamesh beseeches Shamash to aid him now that the battle is at hand. Shamash then confirms his support and provides Gilgamesh with instructions upon how to approach the contest. Suddenly, Humbaba has entered the scene and is bellowing, but the proximity between our protagonists and our antagonist is not clear. It is possible that we may be dealing with an initial meeting between Gilgamesh and Humbaba, somewhere within the Cedar Forest, but away from Humbaba's Cedar Mountain. This would position our three core characters in close proximity and give immediacy to Shamash's instructions. However, there is no reason to assume that our protagonist and antagonist are face-to-face or that Shamash's instructions are being rendered in such circumstances. As we have been

²⁰⁴ Al-Rawi & George 2014:78-81. Line 101ff may be complemented by MS AA (George 2003:598-599): *kīma(gim) ri-i-mu kàd-ri it-ku-p[u . . .]*

[i]t-til-ta is-si-ma ma-li pi-[rit-ta]

[m]a-aš-šar qí-šá-ti i-šas-si

x[.]

^d*hum-ba-ba kīma(gim) ^dadad(iškur) i-[rag-gu-um?]*

Like a fierce wild bull, horns locked [...],
 he bellowed once, and it was (a bellow) full of terror.
 The guardian of the forests was bellowing,
 ... [.....]
 Humbaba was [*thundering*] like the Storm God.

It should be noted here that George had positioned the two Kuyunjik manuscripts from the British Museum collection, MS AA (BM K 8591) and the associated MS DD (BM K 13525), near the end of Tablet IV in his 2003 edition. The discovery and publication of MS ff (Suleimaniyah Museum T.1447) by Al-Rawi & George (2014) has repositioned the fragments to Tablet V, as presented above. For the fragments and discussion, see George (2003:400-403; 598-599; pl. 69 & 70); Al-Rawi & George (2014).

told earlier, Humbaba hears all that murmurs in the Cedar Forest, thus the arrival of our protagonists may be enough to have drawn his attention.²⁰⁵

Instead of an initial encounter, these fragments more likely represent the attack of Humbaba's first aura, his voice, upon our protagonists.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, Shamash's instruction does imply that at this moment Humbaba is outside his abode, demonstrating divergence from the Sumerian poem. It also informs us that Humbaba is more vulnerable to attack so removed from his abode and naturally absent from many of his auras.²⁰⁷ Despite Shamash's efforts, it does not appear that Humbaba is faced powerless in the Akkadian epics. Humbaba seems to strike first, temporarily disabling our protagonists with his tempestuous roar. This possibly provides Humbaba with the time to occupy a position in his stronghold and ready himself for our protagonist's challenge. There is currently no evidence for the gift exchange or the court protocols already discussed elsewhere in the tradition. In fact, the fragments leave you with a sense that Gilgamesh is perhaps more confrontational in the *SB Epic*. Humbaba is not tricked into weakening his status, but is prevented from utilising his strength and power by the intervention of Shamash with the thirteen winds,

ina a-si-du še-pi-šú-nu qaq-qa-ri i-bi-iš-šú
ina sa-a-ri-šú-nu uḥ-tap^{te} -pu-ú si-ra-ra u la-ba-na-nu
iš-ša-lim ur-pa-tum pe-ši-tum
mu-tum ki-ma im-ba-ri i-za-an-nun eli(ugu)-šú-un
^dšamaš(utu) a-na ^dḫum-ba-ba id-kaš-šum-ma me-ḫe-e ra-bu-tu
^{im}šūtu(u₁₈.lu) ^{im}iltānu(si.sá) ^{im}šadū(kur.ra) ^{im}amurru(mar.dú) ^{im}ziq-qa
^{im}ziq-qa-ziq-qa ^{im}šá-par-ziq-qa im-ḫul-lu ^{im}si-mur-ra
a-sak-ku šu-ru-up-pu-ú me-ḫu-ú a-šam-šu-tu

²⁰⁵ *SB Epic*, ii.223 (George 2003:556-567); cf. *GH A*, 64-67 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:185; Edzard 1991:189-190) where Huwawa strikes from his abode having detected the presence of our protagonists in his forest.

²⁰⁶ We have already seen storm analogy for the voice of Humbaba and the attack of the great king. If this passage is considered so, it would offer a parallel for the initial incapacitation of Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Sumerian poems (*GH A* 67-80; Fleming & Milstein 2010:185; Edzard 1991:190-193; cf. where MS AA continues and Enkidu seems to be feeling the effects of the encounter; George 2003:600-601); cf. MB Ug₂ fragment a (George 2007b:248-249).

²⁰⁷ Compare this with the narrative tale of the Anzû bird. The Anzû is only able to steal the tablets of destiny from Enlil and usurp his power once the divine king has divested his royal clothing and stepped away from his throne (Dalley 2000:207). The comparison between the aura-less Huwawa in the Sumerian poems and the one-aura Humbaba in the *SB Epic* enables one to consider how powerful an opponent Humbaba would be with all seven auras, likely unassailable.

13 šārū(im)^{meš} it-bu-nim-ma šá^d ĥum-ba-ba i-tu-ú pa-ni-šú
 ul i-nak-kip a-na pa-ni-šú ul i-ra-aḥ-ḥi-iš ana arki(egir)-šú
 ù^{giš} kakkū(tukul)^{meš} šá^d GIŠ-gím-maš ik-šu-du^d ĥum-ba-ba

‘At the heels of their feet the earth was splitting apart,
 as they whirled around Sirara and Lebanon were sundered.
 White cloud was turned to black,
 death raining down upon them like a mist.
 Shamash roused against Humbaba the mighty stormwinds:
 South Wind, North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, Blast,
 Counterblast, Gale, Tempest, Typhoon,
 Hell-Wind, Icy Blast, Hurricane, Tornado.
 Thirteen winds rose up and the face of Humbaba darkened
 he cannot charge forwards, he cannot kick backwards
 and then the weapons of Gilgamesh did catch Humbaba.’
 (SB Epic, v.133-143)²⁰⁸

Gilgamesh’s failure to relieve Humbaba of his auras before the contest in the *SB Epic*, or prevent him from donning them, provides a logical explanation as to why the physical battles are so much more challenging here. In the *SB Epic* we are presented with a vastly different contest between our protagonist and antagonist. Instead of the battle being summed up in one strike by Gilgamesh as is the case in the Sumerian poems, we have a contest worthy of two formidable opponents.²⁰⁹ Additionally, one could consider the dream sequences *en route* to the Cedar Forest as a series of mock battles where Gilgamesh is faced with different aspects of Humbaba’s fearsome powers. This would create a much more combative episode in the OB and SB narratives and would potentially be indicative of a development of the characters and conflict for these contextualisations.²¹⁰

3.2.4.2 The second of the criteria for challenging Humbaba

With the first of our criteria addressed, it is now necessary to move on to the second, namely acquiring the support of a god. This criterion may already be considered established when Shamash’s aforementioned assistance is considered.

²⁰⁸ George 2003:608-609.

²⁰⁹ It should be noted that some fragments of *GH A* do slightly expand Gilgamesh’s conquest of Huwawa. This expansion does not extend the battle, but includes the binding of Huwawa and his removal from his abode (MSS UrG; UrA; UnB; SiA; Edzard 1991:219; George 1999:158-159; Fleming & Milstein 2010:183; 188).

²¹⁰ For examples of the dreams, see *OB Schoyen*₂ and *SB Epic IV*; George 2003:232-239; 588-597.

In the Sumerian poems, the god's aid comes in the form of the Sebittu, whilst the thirteen winds are deployed at just the right moment in the *SB Epic*. However, there are some peculiarities to Shamash's support across the tradition that should be noted. In the Sumerian poems Gilgamesh seeks out Shamash and convinces him to lend his support to his campaign, whereas in the *SB Epic* we are told that Shamash has inspired the desire for the campaign in the king of Uruk.²¹¹ This is only a subtle difference, as Shamash's support is still being sought throughout the tradition.²¹² Yet in the Sumerian poems it is clearer that this is a transfer of Shamash's support from the antagonist, Huwawa, to the protagonist, Gilgamesh. Consider Huwawa's words as he pleads to the god for his life,

'He took Gilgamesh by the hand:
 "Let me say a word to Utu:
 Utu, I knew neither mother who bore me nor father who raised me.
 I was born in the highlands, and you yourself raised me.
 Gilgamesh swore by the sky, he swore by the earth, he swore by the highlands."
 He clutched at (Gilgamesh's) hand and prostrated himself.'
 (GH A, 153-158)²¹³

This passage informs us that Huwawa had previously received the support of Utu, supporting the idea presented above that Huwawa's fearsome attributes were gifts from the god. It should strike us as strange that Utu would support Gilgamesh in an expedition against his adopted Huwawa. However, this is one of the reasons why this can be best understood as a changing of the guard. A defeated Huwawa realises that his patron god has abandoned him, for it does not seem possible that Gilgamesh could have otherwise won. Thus Huwawa pleads with Utu to save him from his new favourite and chosen successor.

This adoption of Gilgamesh by the sun god, as his earthly agent, may be considered articulated at an earlier point in the *SB Epic* through the comments made by Gilgamesh's mother, Ninsun, to Shamash,

²¹¹ GH A 8-45 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:183-184; Edzard 1991:170-182); GH B 22-50 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:197; Edzard 1993:19-21); *SB Epic*, iii.46-54 (George 2003:576-577); *SB Epic*, v.92 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:80-81).

²¹² Note how Gilgamesh beseeches Shamash for his support upon entering the Cedar Forest, *SB Epic* v.90-94 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:78-81).

²¹³ Fleming & Milstein 2010:188-189; Edzard 1991:219-222 (cf. George 1999:159). It should be noted that it is the Sumerian '*ki-za*' which is being translated as 'prostrated' (Edzard 1991:222).

am-me-ni taš-kun ana ma-[ri-ia ^dGI]Š-gím-maš lib-bi la ša-li-la te-mid-su
e-nin-na-ma tal-pu-us-su-ma il-lak
ur-ḥa ru-qa-ta a-šar ^dḥum-ba-ba
qab-la šá la i-du-ú i-maḥ-ḥar
gi-ir-ru šá la i-du-ú i-rak-kab
a-di u₄-mu il-la-ku ù i-tur-ra
a-di i-kaš-šá-du a-na ^{giš}qišti(tir) ^{giš}erēni(eren)
a-di ^dḥum-ba-ba da-pi-nu i-nar-ru
u mim-ma lem-nu šá ta-zer-ru ú-ḥal-laḡ ina māti(kur)

'Why did you assign (and) inflict a restless spirit on [my] son Gilgamesh?
 For now you have touched him and he will travel
 the distant path to where Humbaba is.
 He will face battle that he does not know,
 he will ride a route that he does not know.
 During the days that he travels there and back,
 until he reaches the Forest of Cedar,
 until he slays ferocious Humbaba,
 and annihilates from the land the Evil Thing that you hate,'
 (SB Epic, iii.46-54)²¹⁴

When Humbaba is viewed to be the incumbent 'great king', one understands here
 that the god has become displeased with Humbaba's rule and wishes it swept from
 the earth. Thus he has inspired the desire for the campaign in Gilgamesh to achieve
 such an end. This would be directly comparable to the Mesopotamia tradition
 which presented conquest as an act of divine will, emphasising the king's role as
 agent of the gods.²¹⁵

Of course, Shamash's royal association, patronage, and functionality needs no
 introduction, but that he is acting in this role is clear within the Gilgamesh
 tradition.²¹⁶ The fact that he is acting as patron for the king, Gilgamesh, in the
 episode should be enough to confirm this, but it is referred to more explicitly in the
 OB tablet from the Schoyen collection,

ib-ri a-ta-mar šu-ut-tam am-mi-nim la te-ed-ki-a-ni ma-di-iš pa-al-ḥa-[at]
i-na bu-di-ia e-mi-da-am ša-di-a-am
ša-du-um i-qū-pa-am-ma i-si-ḥa-an-[ni]

²¹⁴ George 2003:576-577.

²¹⁵ For examples, see *Babylon D*, i.7-ii.11 (Leichty 2011:231-236); *Cyrus Cylinder* 5-19 (Kuhrt 2007:70-71). Both present military actions with reference to divine desire to rid the land of an evil.

²¹⁶ For examples of Shamash's royal association external from the Gilgamesh tradition, see Foster 2005:734-748; Charpin 2013.

bi-ir-ki-ia il-ta-wi <pu>-lu-<uḥ>-tum
a-ḥi-ia ša-lum-ma-tum ud-da-an-ni-in
iš-te-en eṭ-lum la-bi-iš [pa]â(bala)?-a-am
i-na ma-tim na-wi-ir-ma d[u-u]m-qá-am-ma d[a-mi-iq?]
iš-ba-at-ma ku-bu-ur e-m[u-q]i-ia
ša-ap-la-nu ša-di-im-ma iš-ta-al-pa-an-ni
^den šu-ut-tam i-pa-aš-ša-ar iz-za-aq-qá-ra-am-ma a-na ^dGIŠ
i-na-an-na ib-ri ša ni-il-la-ku-šum
ú-ul ša-du-um-ma-a nu-uk-ku-ur mi-im-ma
i-na-an-na ^dḥu-wa ša ni-il-la-ku-šum ú-ul šadûm(kur)-[m]a nu-uk-ku-ur m[i-im]-ma
te-en-né-em-mi-da-ma iš-ti-a-at te-ep-pu-uš
ú!?-ša-am ša mu-tim ši im? x x x ka ri
ur-ta-a'-a-ab uz-za-šu e-li-ka
ú-la-wa pu-lu-uḥ-ta-šu bi-ir-ki-ka
ù ša ta-mu-ru-šu ^dšamaš(utu)-ma šar-ru
i-na u₄-mi ša da-an-na-tim i-ša-ab-ba-at qá-at-ka

“My friend, I (Gilgamesh) have seen a dream! Why did you not rouse me? It was very frightening!

With my shoulder I was propping up a mountain;
the mountain collapsed on me and girt me around.

Terror encircled my legs,
a radiant brightness gave strength to my arms.

There was a man, clad in *royal* [*mantle*,]
he was shining brightest in the land and was most [comely] in beauty.

He took hold of my upper arm,
from under the mountain itself he pulled me forth.”

Enkidu explained the dream, saying to Gilgamesh:

“Now, my friend, the one to whom we go,

is he not the mountain? He is something very strange!

Now, Huwawa to whom we go, is he not the mountain? He is something very strange!

You and he will come face to face and you will do something unique.

The one of death *came forth*

His fury will be enraged against you,
terror of him will encircle your legs.

But the one you saw was King Shamash,
in times of peril he will take your hand.”

(OB Schoyen₂, 4-22)²¹⁷

The above passage relates the first of a series of ominous dreams that Gilgamesh has *en route* to the Cedar Forest, and their propitious explanations by Enkidu. In the dream, Huwawa is represented as a mountain, but significantly Gilgamesh is able to best Huwawa with the aid of a specifically royal deity, King Shamash. The royal symbolism of this dream encompasses the entire conflict between the protagonist and antagonist, with divine royalty coming to the aid of its chosen king. Thus we

²¹⁷ George 2003:232-235. The parallel material is not currently extant in the fragments of Tablet IV of the *SB Epic*.

can see throughout the tradition that Gilgamesh has procured the support of the sun god at the expense of his opponent.

3.2.4.3 The third criterion for challenging Humbaba

Therefore, with royal attributes gifted and divine support evident, the need for the third of our criteria would appear redundant, but nevertheless it is maintained.

When overcome by fear at the prospect of facing Humbaba, it is stated that two will succeed where one may fail,

“Onward, Enkidu. Two men together will not die, a reed bundle will not founder.
None can cut through triple-folded cloth.
Water can drag no one from a rampart.
In a reed hut, fire cannot be put out.
You help me, so I shall help you. What then can anyone do to us?”
(*GH A*, 106-110)²¹⁸

This again stresses the unparalleled power of the great king, even with royal power and divine support it is best to challenge him in alliance with another. This two-on-one combat scene permeates the entire tradition, making the scene recognisable even in the visual sphere.²¹⁹ Yet it is possible to view the scene in a more expanded militarized way. Firstly, the reference to ‘battle’ between the protagonists and the antagonist can be viewed to transcend heroic combat and be considered as being symbolic of a larger, more collective body. The attack of the army of one king upon the city of another may be reduced in narrative to the relevant kings fighting each other.²²⁰ As highlighted above, this has parallels in the narrative style of the

²¹⁸ Fleming & Milstein 2010:186; cf. George 1999:154-155; Edzard 1991:202-203. The *SB Epic* is fragmentary here, but even in its fragmentary state it is clear that a comparable sentiment is being rendered (*SB Epic* v.70-77; George 2003:604-607; cf. *SB Epic*, v.73-86; Al-Rawi & George 2014:78-79).

²¹⁹ Lambert 1987; 2010:98-109; Collon 2001, 165; 2010:114-132; Ornan 2010:237-251. It should be noted that occasionally the slaying of Humbaba is rendered in the visual medium as a two-figure or one-on-one contest (Collon 2010:118-130). A one-on-one contest makes the scene less distinguishable from other heroic battles of myth and even the three-figure contest is not unique visually. In fact, it has a direct parallel within the *Epic* with the Bull of Heaven episode (Collon 2001, 165; Collon 2010:114-115; Ornan 2010:237-251). Thus, it is always possible that non-captioned visual images that fit the pattern are incorrectly identified with the Gilgamesh tradition (Lambert 2010:91-98). One must keep an open mind and always be ready to re-evaluate.

²²⁰ For example, *SB Epic*, ii.263, where the contest is referred to by the Akkadian ‘*qablu(m)*’ ‘battle’. Of course, such rhetoric is equally at home with battling a beast, but this doesn’t nullify the point, it simply makes the dual-reading more polished. The elevation of heroic figures in narrative above the

campaign accounts of Mesopotamian monarchs. Such parallels are perhaps more pronounced in *GH A* and *B*, where Gilgamesh and Enkidu are accompanied on the expedition by the young men of Uruk.²²¹ Here the prominence of the two protagonists in the conquest with the antagonist, Huwawa, readily offers itself to parallels of heroic elevation. The young men of Uruk assist in the lumbering of each surrendered aura, but are rendered as largely impotent in the passages detailing the negotiation, trickery and combat between our three central characters.²²² Therefore, the fact that the *OB Epic* and *SB Epic* have the men of Uruk remaining behind in the city should not lead us to jump to the conclusion that a parallel reading cannot be rendered.²²³ Regardless of who goes on the expedition, across the tradition it is Gilgamesh and Enkidu that battle Humbaba, making the presence of the young men of Uruk insignificant in narrative terms, much as the Neo-Assyrian army appears to be in the aforementioned accounts of their martial kings.²²⁴

3.2.4.4 The Cedar Forest/Mountain as a divine and royal abode

Now that I have addressed the three criteria for facing Humbaba and demonstrated how this relates to a contest between kings for hegemony, it is pertinent highlight a further sophistication of the campaign against the guardian of the Cedar Forest. This will be achieved through a discussion of his abode. I have already discussed some possible locations for the Cedar Forest, and argued for symbolism connected to the frontiers of empire and associated imperial ideology, but there is a further

register of the general battle would not be unfamiliar to any reader of Homer, and it is possible that the echo of such narrative traditions survive with regards to the battles between Alexander and Darius III. Consider, ἐν ἰσσοῦ ξίφει τὸν μηρόν, ὡς Χάρης; φησὶν, ὑπὸ Δαρείου τοῦ βασιλέως εἰς χεῖρας αὐτῷ συνδραμόντος 'At Issus he (Alexander) was wounded in the thigh with a sword, as Chares states, by Darius the king, who had come into hand-to-hand conflict with him' (Plutarch, *De Alexandri magni fortuna aut virtute* 341b; also Plut. *Alexander* 20.4).

²²¹ *GH A*, 48-58 (George 1999:152; Fleming & Milstein 2010:184-185; Edzard 1991:183-187); *GH B*, 51-65 (George 1999:163; Fleming & Milstein 2010:197-198; Edzard 1993:22-24).

²²² *GH A*, 81ff (George 1999:154ff; Fleming & Milstein 2010:186ff; Edzard 1991:194ff). It is worth noting here that the actions of the young men of Uruk involving the lumbering of the auras of Huwawa again present the interrelation of the guardian and his cedars. The very powers that Bilgames is trying to alleviate Huwawa of are embodied in the sacred cedars. These are then lumbered by the young men of Uruk standing by ready to assist (Shaffer 1983:308).

²²³ *OB III*.277ff (George 2003:206-207); *SB Epic*, iii.230ff (George 2003:584-585). Again this change is possibly due to the change in character of Enkidu to a more martial figure.

²²⁴ See *GH A*, 149ff (George 1999:158-160; Fleming & Milstein 2010:188-189; Edzard 1991:217-230) and *GH B*, 123ff (George 1999:165-166; Fleming & Milstein 2010:199-200; Edzard 1993:30-34).

consideration that is relevant to the current study. That is the symbolic significance of the Cedar Forest as an abode. It is this residential function that I will now briefly discuss.

3.2.4.4.1 – The Cedar Mountain as an abode of the gods

In the discussion above, I have argued that Huwawa had previously received the patronage of the sun god, Utu, and that this could plausibly be considered universal within the tradition. Compare that with Enkidu's assertion that Utu must be consulted before campaigning to the Cedar Mountains, as those highlands are his affair.²²⁵ Thus the association between the sun god and the guardian appears linked to the locale. This connection between the locale and the guardian's divine support appears to be further exemplified when we are informed that Enlil assigned him the Seven Terrors, so that he may safeguard the cedar.²²⁶ Now it is possible, as previously stated, that the reason the gods go to such lengths to protect the cedar is the power that its possession indicates. However, another reason for the placing of a guardian on the Cedar Mountain was to guard the divine abode. This is because it can be confidently stated that the Cedar Mountain represents an abode of the gods in the Akkadian epics,

e-ma-ru šadû(kur)^ú ^{giš}erēni(eren) mu-šab ilī(dingir)^{meš} pa-rak^dir-ni-ni

They were gazing at the Cedar Mountain, the dwelling of the gods, the throne-dais of the goddesses
(*SB Epic*, v.6)²²⁷

It should be noted here that in the OB tablets the Cedar Mountain is specifically stated as an 'abode of the Anunnaki', '*mūšab Enunnakkī*' (OB Ishchali 38) and '*mūšab ilī Enunnakkī*' (OB IM 17-18). Dalley has interpreted these variations as a qualification to the comparable SB passage, drawing the conclusion that what is being identified is the abode of the gods of the underworld.²²⁸ One should be

²²⁵ *GH A* 8-12; Fleming & Milstein 2010:183; Edzard 1991:170-172.

²²⁶ OB III.136-137; *SB Epic* ii.227-228; George 2003:200-201; 566-567.

²²⁷ George 2003:602-603, cf. OB IM 17-18; OB Ishchali 37-38 (George 2003:268-269; 264-265; 466).

²²⁸ Dalley 2013:157.

careful when reaching such conclusions. In earlier tradition 'Anunnaki' was a title that could refer to all of the gods. It is only later that we see signs of a separation where 'Igigi' seems to refer to the gods of the heavens and 'Anunnaki' refers to the gods of the underworld. Even then, 'Anunnaki' also refers to gods of the earth, and so would be a fitting title when approaching an earthly abode.²²⁹ The two tablets that provide this 'qualification' are from the OB period, thus emphasising the potential ambiguity highlighted. Therefore, the variation in the SB passage may be deliberate to make it clear that it is not only the gods of the underworld that are being referenced. Additionally, it is in no way clear that we should be considering the variations in apposition. They may be divergent.

Therefore, Humbaba was not just preventing assailants from lumbering the sacred cedar, but also protecting the divine abode located upon the Cedar Mountain. In effect, he is acting as a mortal buffer between mankind and the gods, a role that is not irreconcilable to function of the king in Mesopotamian culture.²³⁰ This means that there was a degree of exclusivity concerning access to and perception of the divine maintained by the king, therefore making it reconcilable that the king may have been understood as the guardian and caretaker of the divine abode/s. This inferred position for Humbaba (as a barrier between the mortal and the divine) is confirmed by what follows after his defeat in the OB Ishchali tablet,

*i-ne-er ḫa-ar-ḫa-ra-am ma-ša-ru^{giš} erēnim(eren)
 ḫe-pu-tim ra-x x x [x (x) x]x
 iš-tu-ma se-bé-et i-ne-ru
 šu-uš-ka-al-lam ša š[i-ta?] bilat(gú)? ù? nam-ša-ar 8 bilat(gú)
 bil-tam ša 10 bilat(gú) il₅-qé!
 ú-ri-id-ma ir-ta-ḫi-<iš> qí-iš-tam*

²²⁹ Von Soden 1964; Falkenstein 1965; Kienast 1965; Black & Green 1992:34; Bienkowski & Millard 2000:23.

²³⁰ The special relationship between the gods and the king, where the king acts as an agent of divine will, has been referenced above. However, this was not just limited to campaigning. Once enthroned, the king had duties to the gods and their cults. He had a beneficent relationship to maintain. In this way, the king was charged with ensuring that due honour was given to the gods, and that cult practices and centres were maintained. Further, this special relationship was considered to be unique and so the king operated as a conduit. On the one hand instructing humanity as to the will of the gods and the appropriate practices in their cults, and on the other hand representing humanity and its desires/needs to the gods (Frankfort 1978:251-274; Hill, Jones & Morales 2013); Cf. *SB Epic*, i.6-8; 43-44 (George 2003:538-541), where Gilgamesh is said to have reinstructed humanity in the appropriate practices in relation to the divine.

mu-ša-ab e-nu-na-ki pu-zu-ra-mi-ip-te-e

^dGIŠ *i-ši ú-ba-ta-aq en-ki-du₁₀ ú-ḫa-ra ur-ba-zi-li*

He slew the orge, the cedar's guardian,
the broken . . . [. . .].

As soon as he had slain (all) seven,
the war-net of *two talents and* dirk of eight talents,
a burden of ten talents he took up,
he went down and trampled through the forest.
He discovered the secret abode of the Anunnaki,
Gilgamesh felling trees, Enkidu choosing the *best timber*.
(OB Ishchali, 34-39)²³¹

With the guardian out of the way, the path to the divine abode is left open to the victor Gilgamesh. It is not clear whether Gilgamesh's path to the divine abode on the Cedar Mountain was simply blocked by the imposing guardian, or initially whilst the guardian was in post it was imperceivable to our protagonist. It may be important that it is specifically Gilgamesh who is said to have discovered the 'abode of the Anunnaki', we are not told that Enkidu was likewise privileged. This may indicate that access to the divine abode on the Cedar Mountain was not predicated solely by removing the obstacle guardian, but also usurping his role and function. We may then consider the possibility that this access which is afforded Gilgamesh in the narrative was to be understood as emblematic of his elevation and successful supplanting of our antagonist. With Humbaba bested and his role usurped by Gilgamesh, our protagonist is now able to locate and approach the divine dwelling on the Cedar Mountain.

Forsyth has already argued that the Cedar Forest and the Cedar Mountain should be considered at the same time as both a real and a mythical place.²³² This is an extremely appealing understanding of the locale. It is demonstrably locatable at limits of Mesopotamian hegemony from the Third to the First Millennium BCE, thus giving the Cedar Forest a tangible grounding at the Upper and Lower Seas. Yet there is something ex-temporal and ex-spatial about the Cedar Mountain across the tradition too. Gilgamesh requires Utu's celestial guides to mark or open the path to

²³¹ George 2003:264-265; cf. OB IM, 15-18 (George 2003:268-269). Cf. Graff 2012:124-129 for the apotropaic utility of Humbaba's image at temples in Mesopotamia.

²³² Forsyth 1981:26.

the Cedar Forest.²³³ This role of guide has been somewhat usurped by Enkidu in the *Epic*, but it appears that in at least one version of the *Epic* our protagonists still require Shamash's assistance to reach their destination,

[li-ša-a]k-ši! (Tl)-id-ka er-ni-ta-ka ^dšamšu(utu)^{š[u]}
na-aq-bi-a-at pi-ka li-kal-li-ma i-na-k[a]
li-ip-te-kum pa-da-nam pe-ḫi-tam
ḫarrānam(kaskal) li-iš-ta-sí-iq a-na ki-ib-sí-ka
ša-di-a li-iš-ta-sí-iq a-na šēpi(gir)-ka

May Šamaš permit you achieve your ambition,
may your eyes show (you) what you have talked of!
May he open for you the paths that are shut,
may he ready the road for your footsteps!
May he ready the mountain for your feet
(OB III, 257-262)²³⁴

We should then consider the possibility that without divine assistance our protagonist would never locate his goal destination, let alone best Humbaba. It seems to be the case that the Cedar Mountain was inaccessible, even imperceivable to those that did not have divine aid. Therefore, without Shamash, Gilgamesh may have plausibly transversed the forested and mountainous regions at the Upper and Lower Seas in their entirety and never accessed the Cedar Mountain. The divine abode on the Cedar Mountain was shut off from all mortals except the privileged few who served as guardians.

This abstract existence for the Cedar Mountain is in keeping with an abode of divine figures. Even if located in the physical landscape the divine aspect remains somewhat imperceivable to mortals. For a parallel consider Mount Olympus from Greek culture, identifiable geographically, but there does not appear to be an understanding that mortals could scale the heights of this mountain just as one would another, and reach Zeus and the other Olympians without special assistance.²³⁵ Likewise, we may understand that one may cross the Cedar

²³³ *GH A*, 31-45 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:184; Edzard 1991:178-182); *GH B*, 32-50 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:197; Edzard 1993:20-21).

²³⁴ George 2003:204-207.

²³⁵ E.g. consider the flight of Trygaeus in Aristophanes, *Peace* (65-209), the locating of the gods, and Hermes' surprise that a mortal had reached the divine abode.

Mountains without locating or setting foot upon the sacred Cedar Mountain within their midst and approaching the home of the gods.

Much like this unstable locale, gods upon mountains in a Mesopotamian context exhibits complexity. Lambert has argued that originally in a Southern Mesopotamian context, gods dwelled in cities, not on mountains. He claimed that 'the gods atop a mountain' motif was introduced by the Amorites.²³⁶ This may be the case, but we should be careful reaching such conclusions based on the relatively flat topography of Southern Mesopotamia. Southern Mesopotamian culture would have been well aware of mountains before any Amorite incursions due to their interactions with Elamite culture and landscape. Further, George has cast doubt upon Lambert's assertion by highlighting possible early examples where, at least metaphorically, gods may be considered to reside on mountains.²³⁷ Therefore, Lambert may have understood a false dichotomy. It appears that a sophisticated and fluid identification for divine abodes is present from very early on in the Mesopotamian canon, as a metaphorical and topographical interplay between mountains, cities, and temples is detected. When temples and cities can be conceptualised as mountains, gods that reside in those cities and their temples can be understood to dwell on mountains, even if they are only metaphorical ones.²³⁸ The Cedar Mountain may be understood to be equally metaphorical, as we have begun to consider and will continue to discuss. Thus an understanding of the Cedar Mountain as a temple, city, or even perhaps more generally, a political centre is tangible.

3.2.4.4.2 – The abode of Humbaba

This understanding of the Cedar Mountain as a metaphor for a temple, city, or political centre forces the return to the analysis of Humbaba's identification and function. The 'guardian on the Cedar Mountain' may be then understood as a

²³⁶ Lambert 1982:314.

²³⁷ George 2003:466, fn.83.

²³⁸ The use of mountains as metaphors for temples and cities is not uncommon in a Mesopotamian context; cf. CAD xvii.1:57; Steinkeller 2007:225-232.

metaphoric titular for the hegemonic Mesopotamian monarch. Thus Shamash and Enlil, jointly representative of divine kingship and hegemony, are seen to appoint their earthly parallel and place him on the Cedar Mountain.²³⁹ Due to this special relationship between the gods and the king, the king abides and serves in proximity to the supreme divine residence on earth, and restricts access to the gods ensuring the maintainance of royal exclusivity. This understanding of the locale and function of the guardian further strengthens the presented identification of Humbaba as a grotesque representation of hegemonic kingship, as one may now consider him as a king guarding something akin to a temple or city rather than simply representing a beast upon the mountain. Humbaba, like our proposed Mesopotamian royal parallel, not only guards the Cedar Mountain, but also abides there, ruling from his political centre.

With Humbaba being considered thus, it then is possible to re-interpret some references to his abode within the Gilgamesh tradition to support this understanding. This adjustment will also further contextualise aspects of Gilgamesh's campaign and present a further objective. The re-interpretation centres upon the reading of the noun 'šubtu'. When Humbaba is considered to be a beast it makes sense to translate his dwelling or 'šubtu' as 'lair'.²⁴⁰ However, if we start to think of him as more of a man and specifically a king, then the more

²³⁹ That the selection and confirmation of an appointee to Humbaba's position was the joint concern of Enlil and Shamash may be further exemplified by Enkidu warning that they should slay Humbaba quickly before Shamash and Enlil discover their plans, as it may anger them (*SB Epic* v.182-187; George 2003:610-611). It may be pertinent that in the *SB Epic* passage, it is specifically Enlil at Nippur and Shamash at Larsa that are identified as being potentially angry at Humbaba's slaying. This may indicate that we are dealing with the presentation of a power transfer in Mesopotamia not only via the abstract patronage of deities, but through the political patronage of cult centres. With regard to the acquiescence of both deities for one to rule, Shamash, the sun god, was representative of divine kingship and thus a patron of earthly kingship (Charpin 2013). Enlil's position as the chief god of the pantheon naturally makes him representative of hegemony and emblematic of supreme kingship, but it is also important to remember that he was the one who decreed and controlled destinies. Thus, his sanction was required and may be considered representative of a ratification and guarantee of the king and his dynasty's destiny to rule, just as I have argued above (cf. *Šulgi D*, 383-396; Klein 1981:88-89; Frayne 1997:93-94). This requirement of the dual support of the sun god and destiny for one's kingship and continued rule is not uncommon in antiquity. For example, consider how the Lydian king, Croesus, was presented remonstrating with his patron, the sun god, Apollo, after his defeat by Cyrus, only to be told that the sun god had delayed his fate as long as possible. The oracle goes on to state that even Apollo cannot avert one's destiny (HDT I.87-91). This may represent the continuity and prevalence of the motif in Near Eastern kingship.

²⁴⁰ For examples, see OB III.102; 275; OB UM rev.4-5 (George 2003:198-199; 206-207; 218-219).

reconcilably human translations of 'šubtu' ('dwelling', 'abode', or 'residence') become more suitable.²⁴¹ This subtle change provides us with a more recognisable setting for the aforementioned court style interaction between our protagonist and antagonist. Humbaba is now presented as residing in an abode within the Cedar Forest, plausibly even a palace. Note that in *GH A*, 121, Humbaba is said to have occupied his 'house of cedar' 'Hu-wa-wa é-^{giš}eren-na-ka-ni'.²⁴² This is unsuitable as a metaphor for the Cedar Forest in general, as the action has already been taking place in the forest at this point. It appears to genuinely refer to an abode built from the cedar. This should then be compared with a suppliant Humbaba's offer to supply Gilgamesh with timber to adorn his palace.²⁴³ Suddenly something akin to a palatial landscape on the Cedar Mountain shifts into view.

An exact conceptualisation of Humbaba's abode is difficult to ascribe with any certainty when we consider that 'šubtu' may also be used to refer to cities where kings may reside.²⁴⁴ However, consider *SB Epic*, iii.11, where the *abulli ša ħumbaba* 'gate of Humbaba' is mentioned.²⁴⁵ This appears to support parallels between Humbaba's abode, and more palpable cities and palatial centres with their intrinsic gates. Also consider the cacophony of animal noises that greet Gilgamesh and Enkidu once they have entered the Cedar Forest, and how it is conceptualised,

[kīma(gim) ki-šī]r? na-a-ri u ti-gi-i :
u₄-mi-šam-ma ur-ta-ša-nu ina pa-ni ^dħum-ba-ba :

'[like a band(?)] of musicians and drummers(?),
daily they bash out a rhythm in the presence of Humbaba.'
(*SB Epic*, v.25-26)²⁴⁶

²⁴¹ CAD xvii.3:172-185. 'Šubtu' was used to refer to royal and divine abodes, but without an adjective present qualifying this and overtly asserting a royal identification, we cannot currently take the reinterpretation this far with confidence. One can be equally pedantic with *GH A*, 149. The Sumerian renders 'da-ga-na' or 'da-ga-ni' which from 'dag' appears to be more accurately translated as 'dwelling' or 'abode' (after Edzard 1991:217-218 who translates it in this way with 'Behausung'). Of course, 'lair' is still possible, even suitable for a man who is evil or has become monstrous through his actions, but this does not appear to have been the reason such a translation was rendered.

²⁴² Edzard 1991:206.

²⁴³ *SB Epic*, v.153-155 (George 2003:608-609).

²⁴⁴ CAD xvii.3:180.

²⁴⁵ George 2003:584-585.

²⁴⁶ Al-Rawi & George 2014:76-77.

An analogy with the royal court seems to be encouraged for Humbaba and his abode, as we are confronted with metaphorical imagery familiar to that of musicians performing for the king.²⁴⁷ When this is considered alongside the surviving Neo-Assyrian manuscript that specifically refers to Humbaba as, *^dhum-ba-ba šar₄ ^{giš}tir ^{giš}ere-ni dan-nu* 'Humbaba, mighty king of the Cedar Forest', the symbolism is clear.²⁴⁸

The Cedar Forest/Mountain is both a natural place with its animal and fauna characteristics, whilst also serving as metaphorical landscape symbolic of the royal residence. The sensory experience compounds this in the mind as the resinous and fragrant cedar that populates the forest and constructs the guardian's abode is also used to build palaces and temples in Mesopotamia. This is engaged with directly by the *Epic* as the goddess, Ishtar, attempts to seduce her new spouse, the new king, Gilgamesh,

a-na bīti(é)-ni i-na sa-am-ma-ti ^{giš}erēni(eren) er-ba
a-na bīti(é)-ni i-na e-re-bi-ka
sip-pu a-rat-tu-ú li-na-áš-ši-qu šēpī(gir)^{min}-ka
lu kām-su ina šap-li-ka šarrū(lugal)^{meš} kabtūtu(idim)^{meš} u rubû(nun)^{meš}
[ka-la?]i-qit šadī(kur)ⁱ u māti(kur) lu-u na-šu-nik-ka bil-tu

'Come into our house with scents of cedar!
 When you come into our house,
 doorway and throne shall kiss your feet.
 Kings, courtiers and nobles shall be bowed down beneath you,
 they shall bring you tribute, [all the] produce of mountain and land.'
 (SB *Epic*, vi.13-17)²⁴⁹

The cedar-scented royal abode is overtly impressed in the overtures of the goddess. It is the nasal sensation that you are expected to encounter as you enter the king's palace. Thus the sight and smell of cedar upon entering the Cedar Forest at the fringes of empire resonates with the sensory experience of royal and divine abodes at home, while the fragrant of a temple or palace within the city mentally transports one to the Cedar Mountain.²⁵⁰ They become synonymous with one

²⁴⁷ Al-Rawi & George 2014:74.

²⁴⁸ SB *Epic*, viii.54 (MS e, rev.33; George 2003:372; 654-655).

²⁴⁹ George 2003:618-619.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Reinartz 2014:25-51; Butler 2015; Clements 2015; Draycott 2015.

another, and the Cedar Forest becomes something that is both royal and divine in the mind.

When Humbaba's dwelling is considered in this way, another function of the Sebittu is amplified, namely their apotropaic qualities. They may be understood to reside at the gate of palace or city acting as guardians and protectors of the residence and those within it.²⁵¹ The aforementioned gate of Humbaba and his house ('palace') of cedar naturally come to mind. Thus the Sebittu can be considered to protect Humbaba's abode as well as his person. It is interesting that as we have already seen in the Sumerian poems, Gilgamesh does not enter Huwawa's abode until the Sebittu have been surrendered. This may plausibly be because he cannot enter with the guardians in place due to his intentions of usurpation.²⁵²

²⁵¹ See Wiggerman (1992:46; 58ff; 2010), for the Sebittu as apotropaic figures. It is instructive to consider the role of the Sebittu in the Etana legend here. While narrating a time before kingship had been sent down from heaven to man, the gods are presented as establishing Kish and forming the four quarters ready for the inception of human kingship. The Sebittu guard the gates of Kish against outsiders and those that would martially challenge Kish's position (*SB Etana Legend* l.1-19; Kinnier Wilson 1985:82-85; Dalley 2000:190-191). Therefore, the protective aspect of the Sebittu may be considered to extend beyond the palace itself to the city, presenting them as guardians of the royal seat. These seven warriors act as gatekeepers of the office of kingship, the king's person, and his abode, preventing rivals from usurping his position. This understanding provides an enhanced context for the stone relief in the royal palace of Assurbanipal in Nineveh, which details an anthropomorphised representation of the Sebittu (Fig. 8; Black & Green 1992:162-163).

²⁵² It should be noted with regard to the Sebittu in the Etana legend, that Lambert has argued that in an OB period version (*OB Etana*, line 10; Lambert 1980; cf. Kinnier Wilson 1985:30-31), it is not overtly the Sebittu that are identified as the protectors, but simply seven gates that are barred. Even if accepted, it is not as at variance with the SB version as Lambert would have us believe. The Sebittu as guardians at the gates may also be understood as the gates themselves, both functioning likewise to bar intruders. A useful way of reconciling this may be to consider the myth of Inanna's descent already highlighted. When entering the underworld to gain access to the inner abode and rulers of the underworld, Inanna must pass through seven protective gates and at each is demanded to surrender one of her seven protective auras. Thus, by time she has reached the inner sanctum, her power to usurp or command is diminished and she is at the mercy of her hosts (Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:65-76). The Sebittu may be considered to likewise bar entrance or strip those permitted to enter of their own protective auras. An interesting example of the persistence of this ideology may be identified in the account of the Median capital, Ecbatana, as found in Herodotus (l.98-99). Here, as kingship and hegemony is established amongst the Medes, their king, Deioces, builds his capital on a mountain. The king's abode is in the centre behind seven consecutive walls and gates with the city's inhabitants residing outside the outer wall. Thus, the king, his office, and his abode are protected by seven gates from any external usurper. Also note that we told that Uruk was likewise barred. When convening an assembly to announce his campaign to the Cedar Mountain it is said of Gilgamesh that, [*a-bu-u*]l-la-t[i(m)]ša] uruk^{ki} 7 i-di-il-ma! (SU) 'He bolted the seven city gates of Uruk' (OB III.172; George 2003:200-201).

This theory may be further supported if we reconsider another usage of 'šubtu'.

When Enkidu is warning Gilgamesh against the campaign against Humbaba he ends his protestations with,

am-mi-nim ta-aḥ-ši-iḥ an-ni-a-am e-pe-ša-am
qá-ba-al la ma-ḥa-ar šu-pa-at ḥu-wa-wa

Why do you desire to do this thing?

An unwinnable battle is the ambush of Huwawa.

(OB III.114-115)²⁵³

George's translation of the line and of 'šubtu' as 'ambush' is certainly plausible.²⁵⁴

However, it is possible to translate the line, 'Huwawa's abode is an unwinnable battle (or 'a battle not to face')'.²⁵⁵ If my translations are followed, then Humbaba's abode may also be considered as an objective of the campaign. Gilgamesh is attacking Humbaba at his royal centre and overthrowing his seat of power, something on par with attacking the Neo-Assyrians at Nineveh.

Similar allusions to a power-base for Humbaba are being rendered at *SB Epic*, v.97-99, as Gilgamesh is warned against allowing Humbaba to occupy this position.²⁵⁶

This is the same passage where the auras are conceptualised as cloaks and so it appears clear that the entire section has royal connotations attached to the power of the royal trappings, throne, or seat. Further, a line in the Neo-Sumerian hymn, *Šulgi O*, may also support this reading. Whilst narrating Gilgamesh's defeat of Huwawa, it is stated Gilgamesh did as follows onto Huwawa, ki.tuš ki.gar.ra.ni.ta i[m.] 'from his well-founded abode [you brought him down]'.²⁵⁷ This further supports the formidable nature of Huwawa's abode and makes the understanding of it as a power base more tangible. Clearly Humbaba's abode should be

²⁵³ George 2003:198-199 (cf. OB III.199-200; George 2003:202-203).

²⁵⁴ George's translation of line 115 fits the context and tone of the passage much more readily than 'Huwawa's ambush is an irresistible onslaught' in CAD (xvii.3:184).

²⁵⁵ It should be noted that George himself translates 'šubtu' as 'lair' and not 'ambush' in a similar context, OB UM rev.4-5 (George 2003:218-219). I suspect the reason for opting for the alternative translation of 'šubtu' ('ambush') is predicated by the categorising of Humbaba as a beast rather than a king.

²⁵⁶ Al-Rawi & George 2014:80-81 (quoted above).

²⁵⁷ George 2003:111; cf. ki.tuš ki.gar.ra.ni.ta i[m-ma-ra(?)-an-è(?)] 'from his fortified abode [you removed(?) him]' (Klein 1976:280-281).

legitimately considered as symbolic of a political or palatial centre, a power-base or stronghold where Humbaba ruled from and located his court.

3.2.4.5 The king is dead, long live the king!

The discussion above clearly demonstrates that it is possible to consider Gilgamesh and Humbaba as two powerful kings. Over the course of the episode it appears that we are being presented with a changing of the guard, resulting in the transition of our protagonist from simply the king of Uruk to the ordained ruler of foreign lands. I have shown that the interactions between our protagonist and antagonist, as well as the location of our episode, were imbued with royal symbolism. Further, I have demonstrated that the episode engages with ideals of imperial space and divine sanction. When the episode is continually contextualised against these ideological markers of kingship, an understanding of Humbaba as representative of Enlil's currently sanctioned ruler is engendered. This then leads us to reconsider Humbaba's stated function and position within the *Epic*,

aš-šum šu-ul-lu-m[u^{giš}erēnim(eren)]
pu-ul-ḫi-a-tim 7 i-š[i-im-šum^den-lil?]

'In order to safeguard [the cedar],
 [Enlil] assigned [him] the Seven Terrors.'
 (OB III.136-137)²⁵⁸

What has been read simply as the placement of a monstrous guardian may also be understood as a fearsome representation of the divinely chosen agent on earth. Utu, the sun god and royal patron, is convinced to support the challenge of Humbaba's hegemony by Gilgamesh in the Sumerian poems and drives it in the Akkadian epic tradition. Thus, Humbaba's rule may be considered to be no longer desirable to gods and is to be usurped by the new favourite, Gilgamesh.

²⁵⁸George 2003:200-201; cf. *aš-šú šul-lu-mu erēni(eren) / ana pul-ḫa-a-ti ša nišī(ùg)^{meš} i-šim-šú^den-lil* 'In order to keep the cedars safe, Enlil made it his (Humbaba's) destiny to be the terror of the people' (*SB Epic*, ii.227-228; George 2003:566-567).

A conspicuous shift in address from the *SB Epic* seems to support such a reading of the episode. When Gilgamesh has battled with Humbaba and bested him, a suppliant Humbaba seems to accept Shamash's decree and refers to Gilgamesh by the title 'king' for the first time,

^dh^um-ba-ba nap!(AB)-šá-tuš i-še-‘-e izakkara(mu)^{ra} ana ^dGIŠ-gím-maš
 še-eḫ-re-e-ti ^dGIŠ-gím-maš umma(ama)-ka ú-lid-ka
 u i-lit-ti šá ^f[ri-mat-^dnin-sún] at-ta
 ina pi-i ^dšamaš(utu) u šadī(kur)ⁱ x x-e (or un)-ma
 pe-er-‘-um-ma šá libbi(šá) uruk^{ki} šarru(lugal) ^dGIŠ-gí[m-m]aš
 [x] x x ^dGIŠ-gím-maš mi-i-ti ul x-tar-ri [(x)]x-lu
 [ár-du bal-t]u ana be-lí-šú [.]
^dGIŠ-gím-maš e-ṭir napištī(zī)^{ti} [.]
 lu-ši-ba-ak-kúm-ma ina [.]
 iṣ-ši ma-la taq-qa-ba-a [.]
 lu-uṣ-ṣur-ka ^{giš.šim}asa(gir) ^{gi}[š[?]]
 iṣ-ši bal-ti eka[li(é.gal) . . .]

'Pleading for his life, Humbaba said to Gilgamesh:
 "You are young, Gilgamesh, (as when) your mother bore you,
 but you are the offspring of [Wild-Cow Ninsun!]
 By command of Shamash also the mountains ..., ²⁵⁹
 An offshoot sprung from Uruk's midst is King Gilgamesh!
 [...], Gilgamesh, a dead man cannot ...,
 [a slave] alive [can] for his lord.
 O Gilgamesh, spare my life [.....],
 let me dwell here for you in [.....!]
 Trees as many as you command from me [.....],
 I will guard for you the myrtle, the [.....],
 Timber that is the pride of a palace [...]"'
 (*SB Epic*, v.144-155)²⁶⁰

The impact of this shift should be dramatic to the reader, as it represents the completion of the reversal of status between our protagonist and antagonist. Gilgamesh is now the superior king and is addressed as such by his defeated enemy pleading for mercy. The initial scenes of reception or interaction from the Sumerian poems are now reversed and it is the defeated Humbaba who is offering service, compliance, and alliance. The fallen king hails his successor in an attempt to save his life and assumes the role of a suppliant vassal. This shift for Humbaba is also found in *GH A*, when Enlil reprimands Gilgamesh for killing Humbaba. Enlil states

²⁵⁹ Line 147 is fragmentary and so is unclear. George (2003:609; fn4) has also proposed the possible reading *bēl(umun) šadī* 'Šamaš, lord of the mountains'.

²⁶⁰ George 2003:608-609.

that Huwawa should have shared Gilgamesh's meal and dined at his table instead of tasting death.²⁶¹ The socio-political function of the King's Table in Mesopotamia leaves one in little doubt of Huwawa's humanity and his new position as vassal to King Gilgamesh.²⁶²

Yet a further, and perhaps even more conspicuous, action that supports the presented reading directly follows the culmination of the episode. As a victorious Gilgamesh cleanses and sheds his soiled attire, we are told that he adorns himself in royal dress,

im-si ma-le-šu ub-bi-ib til-le-šu
ú-na-si-is qim-mat-su e-lu še-ri-šu
id-di mar-šu-ti-šu it-tal-bi-šá za-ku-ti-šu
a-ša-a-ti it-taḥ-li-pa-am-ma ra-kis a-gu-uḥ-ḥu
^dGIŠ-gím-maš a-ga-šú i-te-ep-ra-am-ma
a-na dum-qí šá ^dGIŠ-gím-maš i-ni it-ta-ši ru-bu-tú ^dIštar(15)
[a]l-kám-ma ^dGIŠ-gím-maš lu-ú ḥa-ir at-ta
in-bi-ka ia-a-ši qa-a-šu qí-šam-ma
at-ta lu-ú mu-ti-ma ana-ku lu-ú áš-šat-ka

'He washed his matted hair, he cleaned his equipment,
 he shook his locks down over his back.
 He cast aside his dirty things, he clothed himself with his clean things,
 he wrapped himself in cloaks, tied with a sash.
 Gilgameš put on his crown.
 The lady Ištar looked covetously on the beauty of Gilgameš:
 "Come, Gilgameš, you be the bridegroom!
 Grant me your fruits, I insist!
 You shall be my husband and I will be your wife!"
 (SB Epic, vi.1-9)²⁶³

Having defeated Humbaba, Gilgamesh now cleanses and dresses himself as a king in full regalia. It is interesting that Gilgamesh is said to wrap himself in cloaks. It is possible that these are the aura-imbued cloaks taken from Humbaba. Alternatively, they may be Gilgameš's own comparable regalia, his royal cloaks of radiance.

²⁶¹ GH A, 185-192 (Edzard 1991:229-230; George 1999:160; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:348-349; 352; Fleming & Milstein 2010:189). One should note that Civil (1999/2000:189; 2003:84; followed by Michalowski 2010a:161) has presented an alternative reading here with Enlil assuring Huwawa's place ahead of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, and the granting of the guardian their portion of food and drink. Unless the reference is to Enlil's table, this seems to be a non-sensical reward for the decapitated guardian. Therefore, the more common understanding presented above is followed in this study.

²⁶² Cf. Sasson 2004; Parpola 2004.

²⁶³ George 2003:618-619.

However one concludes, an understanding of power-imbued royal vestments cannot be escaped in a Mesopotmian context. We are therefore presented with a costume change that emphasises the elevation of our protagonist. This visual elevation into the role of king is directly followed in the *SB Epic* by the offer of marriage from the divine royal consort, Ishtar.²⁶⁴ It is undeniable that Gilgamesh has been elevated to divinely recognised kingship as a result of this episode.

3.3 Neo-Assyrian kings playing the part

Now that I have made the case for a reading of royal challenge and transfer within the Humbaba episode across the Gilgamesh tradition through identifying aspects of Mesopotamian royal and imperial ideology, it is pertinent to briefly discuss possible instances of the process in reverse. This is to highlight motifs within the royal narratives of Mesopotamian kings that may indicate intertextuality with this episode of the Gilgamesh tradition and provide examples of contextualisation. Of course, the exact direction and path of influence and transmission is difficult to assert, but any identification of parallels within the narratives of 'historical' royal action helps cement the continued ideological significance of the episode, as well as the place of mythology in 'historical' narrative.

The parallel offered above, that attacking Humbaba in his abode was tantamount to attacking the Neo-Assyrians at Nineveh, was not rendered lightly. Although I would argue that there may be a near ubiquity of parallels within the Neo-Assyrians royal inscriptions for this episode, it will be necessary for the parameters of this study to limit our exempla. Thus, I will briefly discuss the Sennacherib's building of an 'unrivalled palace', and Assurbanipal's conquest of Elam. Through these examples, I intend to argue for the presentation of the transfer of the Cedar Mountain to the Neo-Assyrian centre, Nineveh, and that Assurbanipal's campaign against Elam can be seen to engage with the motifs of the Humbaba episode.

²⁶⁴ See *SB Epic*, vi.6-21, where the royal associations of this offer are explicit (George 2003:618-619).

3.3.1 An unrivalled palace of cedar

Even if the reader resists the reinterpretation of Humbaba's abode, it cannot be denied that the cedar can be utilised in palace building and that this function is present in the Gilgamesh tradition. Humbaba himself makes reference to this when pleading for mercy,

^dGlŠ-*gím-maš e-ṭir napišti*(zi)^{ti} [.]
lu-ši-ba-ak-kúm-ma ina [.]
iš-ši ma-la taq-qa-ba-a [.]
lu-uš-šur-ka ^{giš.sim}*asa*(gir) ^{giš?}[.]
iš-ši bal-ti eka[*li*(é.gal) . . .]

O Gilgamesh, spare my life [.....,]
 let me dwell here for you in [.....!]
 Trees as many as you command from me [.....,]
 I will guard for you the myrtle, the [.....,]
 Timber that is the pride of a palace [...]"'
 (SB Epic, v.151-155)²⁶⁵

It is this application in palace building of the cedar and the trees in general from the Cedar Forest that I wish to discuss further here. I have argued that the Cedar Mountain was an abode of the gods and of the hegemonic king. I have also highlighted that cities, palaces and temples were at times metaphorical conceptualised as mountains. Thus, I wish to discuss some instances where the Neo-Assyrian royal centre, Nineveh, may have been conceptualised as the Cedar Mountain. The argument centralises upon Sennacherib's building of an 'unrivalled palace'.²⁶⁶ Sennacherib was not the only king to build an unrivalled palace and the parallels are not limited to this one king's activities, but I believe that they can be best exemplified through him. Sennacherib's project to create an unrivalled palace was a continuation of the activities of his father and predecessor, Sargon II.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ George 2003:608-609.

²⁶⁶ For Sennacherib's 'unrivalled palace' (SW Palace, Nineveh), see Luckenbill 1924:94-127; Reade 1998:50-61; Dalley 2013:127-151.

²⁶⁷ Sargon II's construction of an 'unrivalled palace' at his new city, Dur Sharrukin 'Fort of Sargon' is a direct predecessor of Sennacherib's project at Nineveh (Albenda 1986; 2003; Dalley 2013:127-129). A key difference is that Sargon constructs a new site for his Cedar Mountain, where as Sennacherib redevelops a current seat of power. Perhaps, this means both or either practice may be employed. Also, it should be noted that Sargon's naming of the site, Dur Sharrukin, fits well with the idea that it would be somewhere that the hegemonic Sargon would be difficult to dislodge from, just as Humbaba was from his mountain.

Further, Sennacherib's son and successor, Esarhaddon, also presents himself in his inscriptions carrying out a parallel project.²⁶⁸ Therefore, any identified parallels may be considered as prominent in the Sargonic period.

Sennacherib goes to considerable lengths to emphasise the scale of his project and these details present a familiar picture. Kings are subjugated around the Upper Sea and then commanded to provide the materials for the project. Stone is hewn from the mountains to lay the foundations, build the palace, and create decorative items such as statues, creating a reality where mountains are literally being dismantled and transported to Nineveh. Finally, cedar, as well as other timber, is sourced from the cedar forest to decorate and roof the palace.²⁶⁹ These activities already allow one to identify parallels between the episode in the Gilgamesh tradition and the actions of Sennacherib, but it is a further detail of the building project that makes the parallel hard to avoid.²⁷⁰ This is the park attached to the palatial complex.

Sennacherib describes it thus,

^wšar-maḥ-ḥu tam-šil^{šad} ḥa-ma-nim
šá gi-mir rikke^{col} inbu^{inbu} šip-pa-ap-te
iše^{pl} biblat(lat) šadī(i) ù kal-di
a-di iše^{pl} na-aš šipāti^{col}
ki-rib-šu ḥur-ru-šu i-ta-a-ša az-ku-up

'A great park, like unto Mt. Amanus'²⁷¹

²⁶⁸ For examples see, *Esarhaddon 1 & 2* (Leichty 2011:11-35).

²⁶⁹ For example see, E1 (specifically, col.v.49ff; Luckenbill 1924:104-111); cf. *Esarhaddon 1* (specifically, col.v.54-vi.1; Leichty 2011:23-24). A relief of Sennacherib's captures some of these activities (Fig. 7). It details the quarrying of stone for Sennacherib's palace project, and it also depicts Neo-Assyrian soldiers in full military outfitting facing in opposing directions just below a mountainous and forested landscape. It is possible to consider that all aspects of the campaign and the resulting building project are being depicted cross-temporally and cross-spatially. See Barnett 1976:28-29; VII-VII; Reade 1998:26-27; 50-61; Collins 2008:74-95; Ataç 2010:61-69 for some illustrations and commentary on the iconography of Sennacherib's palace.

²⁷⁰ Cf. 2 Kings 19:23 and Isaiah 37:24, which plausibly represent the biblical reception of a presentation of Sennacherib's activities in this region in parallel to Gilgamesh and the Humbaba episode (Dalley 1991:32).

²⁷¹ *šar-maḥ-ḥu* is more commonly rendered *irimāḥu* " (CAD v.8:406; Wiseman 1983:138; Dalley 2013:129). Wiseman (1983:138) has suggested that although *irimāḥu tamšil^{šad} ḥamānim* is normally translated as 'a great park like unto Mt Amanus', it is possible to equally understand a reference to the Elamite region of ^{kur}Hamāni. If Wiseman is followed, then it is possible to understand an ambiguity in the inscription where the image of either or both Cedar Forests is engendered. Cf. E1, col.vi.24-25 & *Esarhaddon 1*, col.v.75 (Luckenbill 1924:106; Leichty 2011:23) where the cedar and cypress are sourced from Mount Sirara and Mount Lebanon. Although, one should be cautious when trying to argue for such a level of sophistication regarding location in the Neo-Assyrian inscriptions

wherein all kinds of herbs and fruit trees,
 trees, such as grow on the mountains and in Chaldea,
 as well as trees bearing wool,
 were set out, I planted by its (the palace's) side.'
 (E1, col. vii. 53-57)²⁷²

Sennacherib is recreating the landscape of the Cedar Mountains in his palatial complex at Nineveh. Not only has the cedar been lumbered and utilised in building and decorating his palace just as Humbaba suggested to Gilgamesh, but mountain rock was quarried to build the new mountain/palatial complex.²⁷³ Sennacherib is presented in his inscriptions re-creating the Cedar Mountain at his capital through the building of his unrivalled palace. Thus, the viewer is encouraged to see the Cedar Mountain when they gaze upon the royal palace and centre, and envision the king as residing on said mountain in a house of cedar. This is all possible due to Sennacherib's campaigning to and around the Upper Sea creating hegemony for the Neo-Assyrian monarch over a number of vassal kings. Any foreign king or visitor to Nineveh would be left to marvel at Sennacherib's grand abode just as Gilgamesh and Enkidu did when they arrived at the Cedar Forest.

In this way, the Neo-Assyrian monarch can be viewed to occupy an abode readily paralleled with that of Humbaba's, making the case for the guardian's identification as a hegemonic king all the more plausible. Yet, the Cedar Mountain is not only an abode of the hegemonic king in the Gilgamesh tradition, but also an abode of the gods. Nineveh is equally suitable to function in this way too, as we are more comfortably (for Mesopotamia) in the territory of gods residing in cities. However, Sennacherib's accounts of his building project do possibly engage with the transfer of the gods to this new centre too. Upon completion of the works, Sennacherib invites Assur, and the other gods and goddesses of Assyria into his palace, offers

as I proposed above for the Gilgamesh tradition it is possible to reach this understanding. The inscriptions and imagery of the building project do allow such a sophistication to be considered. It appears quite clear from the list of kings employed in the project by Esarhaddon that we are located at the Upper Sea (*Esarhaddon 1*, col.v.54-col.vi.1; Leichty 2011:23-24), but the detailing of sourcing timber from Sirara and Lebanon may be understood as engaging with the microcosm.

²⁷² Luckenbill 1924:111.

²⁷³ For example, see the *Bellino Cylinder* (B1.49; Luckenbill 1924:99), where mountain stone is used for the foundations.

them countless sacrifices and has a mass feast.²⁷⁴ The comparable passage from Esarhaddon's grand palace building project makes it clear that the gods are bestowing their blessing and patronage on the Neo-Assyrian monarch's kingship, granting him and his reign good health and longevity.²⁷⁵ Thus, with the transfer complete, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and whoever else fulfils the ideological markers, are transformed/confirmed as the hegemonic king and the 'living one'.

Two further considerations of this royal practice warrant discussion. Firstly, the label *ekallu šāninu la išû* 'unrivalled palace' may be more sophisticated than previously thought.²⁷⁶ Instead of being understood simply as a commentary on the impressive and opulent features of the palace, it can be further assessed as an aspect of the king's sovereignty. The king's position as resident on the Cedar Mountain and agent/guardian of the gods, positions him at the top of earthly kingship. Therefore, the king, his royal seat, and his royal house exist and rules without a rival, an unrivalled king rules from his unrivalled seat of power, or palace. Consider the description of the Uruk built by Gilgamesh in the *Epic*,

ú-pi-šú dūra(bàd) šá uruk(unug)^{ki} su-pú-ri
 šá é.an.na qud-du-ši šu-tum₄-mi el-lim
 a-mur du-ur-šú šá ki-ma qé-e ni-ip-š[u?]
 i-tap-la-as sa-me-ta-šu šá la ú-maš-šá-lu mam-ma
 ša-bat-ma^{giš} simmilta(kun₄) šá ul-tu ul-la-nu
 qit-ru-ub ana é.an.na šu-bat^dištar(15)
 šá šarru(lugal) ár-ku-ú la ú-maš-šá-lu amēlu(lú) mam-ma
 e-li-ma ina! muḥḥi(ugu) dūri(bàd) šá uruk^{ki} i!(IM)-tal-lak
 te-me-en-nu ḥi-iṭ-ma libitta(sig₄) šu-ub-bu
 šum-ma libitta(sig₄)-šú la a-gur-rat
 u uš-šú-šú la id-du-ú 7 mun-tal-ku
 [šár] ālu(uru)[šár^{giš}] kirātu(kiri₆)^{meš} šár es-su-ú pi-t[ir] bīt(é) ^dištar(15)
 [3 šár] ù pi-ti-ir ur[u]k^{ki} tam-ši-ḥu

²⁷⁴ E1, col.viii.65-76 (Luckenbill 1924:116).

²⁷⁵ *Esarhaddon 1*, col.vi.44-64 (Leichty 2011:25). Cf. the aforementioned myth, *Enki's Journey to Nibru*, which recounts the rise of the first city before the Flood, Eridug. Tradition claims that it was built by the god, Enki, who 'made Eridug rise up from the ground like a mountain'. Upon completion of the temple, Enki travels to Nippur and presents a feast for the gods which elicits their sanction and patronage for the first city (Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:330-333).

²⁷⁶ For an example of this title see E1, col.vii.51 (Luckenbill 1924:111). It should be noted that Esarhaddon referred to his palace under the title *Ešgalšiddudua*, 'the palace that administers everything'. This title makes the political supremacy of the centre clearer than the label employed by Sargon II and Sennacherib, but I intend to argue that *ekallu šāninu la išû* should be understood in the same way.

'He built the wall of Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
 of holy Eanna, the pure storehouse.
 See its wall which is like a *strand of wool*,
 view its parapet which nobody can replicate!
 Take the stairway²⁷⁷ that has been there since ancient times,
 and draw near Eanna, the seat of Ištar,
 that no later king can replicate, nor any man.
 Go up on to the wall of Uruk and walk around,
 survey the foundation platform, inspect the brickwork!
 (See) if its brickwork is not kiln-fired brick,
 and if the Seven Sages did not lay its foundations!
 [One *šár* is] city, [one *šár*] date-grove, one *šár* is clay-pit, half a *šár* the temple of Ištar:
 [three *šár*] and a half (is) Uruk, (its) measurement.
 (*SB Epic*, i.11-23)²⁷⁸

No later king can replicate or surpass Uruk, just as they are unable to replicate or surpass Gilgamesh's achievements. Both the king and city of Uruk are considered unrivalled in the *Epic*. Sennacherib was attempting to present an image of his kingship and his capital, Nineveh that is likewise unrivalled.²⁷⁹ This understanding of the abode as an aspect of kingship fits well with what I have argued above for the dwelling of Humbaba. Any attempt to usurp the hegemonic king would require his abode to be a significant objective of the campaign, and it is this factor that moves us onto the second consideration.

The challenger must not only defeat the incumbent king, but must usurp his royal centre. This may be achieved by simply occupying the seat and replacing the preceding guardian. This approach would not require the ideological relocation of the Cedar Mountain that has been discussed above. However, in the Sargonid examples there appears to be an attempt to conceptualise this transfer of the Cedar Mountain to a new location. This would naturally require the destruction of the previous site, something that is not alien from the *Epic*. Note that after slaying Humbaba, Gilgamesh is said to have reduced the forest to a wasteland.²⁸⁰ If

²⁷⁷ Alternatively, 'grasp the slab' (George 2003:539).

²⁷⁸ George 2003:538-539.

²⁷⁹ Sennacherib claims that Assur gave him *šarru-ut la ša-na-an* 'unrivalled kingship' (H2, col.i.10; Luckenbill 1924:23). Note that in the passage quoted directly above a section of Gilgamesh's Uruk is described as *kirātu* a sort of 'fruit-bearing garden' (*SB Epic*, i.22; CAD v.8:411-415) providing a parallel, perhaps a model, for Sennacherib's Nineveh (Wiseman 1983:137-138).

²⁸⁰ *SB Epic*, v.303 (Al-Rawi & George 2014:82-83).

Nineveh is then presented as the new Cedar Mountain, any challenger to Neo-Assyrian power would have to launch a campaign against the Assyrian capital just as Gilgamesh did against Humbaba's centre. The sophisticated locale of the Cedar Mountain is exemplified. The microcosm proposed above enables the Cedar Mountain to exist within the imperial space at the royal centre, as all between the two forests lies within the Cedar Forest torn asunder by Gilgamesh and Humbaba. Thus, the utilisation of cedar in palace building and the construction of exotic palatial gardens can be understood as an ideological marker of supreme power and as an engagement with a microcosmic representation of the imperial dominion of the Mesopotamian monarch.

It should be noted here that an analysis comparable to that which has just been rendered for the Sargonid building of unrivalled palaces, may be rendered for the Neo-Sumerian king, Shulgi's building of his *E-ḫursag* 'Mountain House'. Consider a passage from the Neo-Sumerian hymn, *Šulgi B*,

[šu]l-gi-me-en é-mu é-ḫur-sag é-gal-é-gal-bi-im
[é-gal]-nam-lugal-la-gá zà-mí-gal-gal-la-kam

'I, Šulgi, my house, the "Mountain House", is a superlative palace.
These are the great songs of praise of the [palace] of my kingship.'
(*Šulgi B*, 380-382)²⁸¹

Just as with the Sargonids, the Ur III period king, Shulgi builds a palace greater than other palaces, and it is clear that it was representative of his kingship and situated in mountain environs. Therefore, we are presented with plausible contextualisations for the Humbaba episode within the Gilgamesh tradition concerning imperial and royal ideology during in the Neo-Sumerian and Neo-Assyrian periods.²⁸²

²⁸¹ Frayne 1997:98-99; cf. *Šulgi B*, 377-378; Castellino 1972:68-69.

²⁸² Also see Stronach's (1990) discussion of the royal garden as a political statement in the First Millennium BCE. Stronach briefly discusses the Neo-Assyrian practice of creating royal gardens, and its continuity and change through the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. His idea that the quartered design of Cyrus' garden at Pasargadae was a microcosmic representation of the king's four quarters of dominion is extremely appealing and not unrelated to our discussion thus far.

3.3.2 Assurbanipal and the slaying of Humbaba

The Neo-Assyrian kings created garden, palace, and temple complexes that were supposed to be reminiscent of the Cedar Mountain in an effort to reposition the ideological fulcrum of power at their political base. By doing so, they were conceptualised as the hegemonic king, the one who must be challenged and usurped if power was to change hands. It is then in question each time the hegemonic king was challenged by a rival, whether he was a good, strong king, loved by the gods (a Gilgamesh figure), or grotesque king, decried by the gods (a Humbaba figure). Only the outcome of the challenge would provide an answer, as the gods would come to the aid their favourite and ensure victory. The outcome of the contest would determine whether the current hegemonic king continued to enjoy the gods' protection or whether the gods had raised a challenger to sweep his evil from the land.

I intend to argue that a campaign of Assurbanipal's against Elam was conceptualised as such a contest.²⁸³ The campaign I intend to focus upon is the one that was undertaken to oust the Elamite usurper, Te-Umman.²⁸⁴ This was presented as a significant campaign for Assurbanipal and its iconographic and textual narration was pertinently used to redecorate the SW Palace (Sennacherib's 'unrivalled palace') as well as Assurbanipal's own palace (North Palace) at Nineveh.²⁸⁵ In particular, two captions that accompany the reliefs from the SW Palace, detailing the battle of the Ulai River (aka the battle of Til-Tuba) in 653 BCE, present a potentially confusing picture. Compare,

SAG.DU ^m*te-um*-[*man* MAN KUR NIM.MA.KI]
ša ina MURUB₄ *tam-ḥa*-[*ri* KU₅-*su*]
a-ḥu-ru-u ÉRIN.HI.A-*ya a-na bu-us*-[*su-rat*]
ḥa-de-e ú-šaḥ-ma-ṭu a-na KUR AŠ+[ŠUR-KI]

²⁸³ For Assurbanipal's campaigns against Elam, see Gerardi 1987.

²⁸⁴ Gerardi 1987:135-157.

²⁸⁵ Barnett 1976:29-34. It should not be considered coincidental that the SW Palace at Nineveh can be considered to engage with the Humbaba episode in its construction, layout and attached ideology, and that it was redecorated with reliefs that may be considered to likewise contextualise Sargonid activity.

'Head of Te-Um[man, king of Elam],
which in the midst of bat[tle], a common
soldier in my army [cut off]. To (give me) the good ne[ws]
they hastily dispatched (it) to Assy[ria].'
(Slab 1, Rm XXXIII, SW Palace, Nineveh)²⁸⁶

With,

^mte-um-man MAN KUR NIM.MA.KI šá ina MÈ dan-ni
muḥ-ḥu-šu ^mtam-ri-i-tú DUMU-šú GAL-u
ŠU.II-su iṣ-ba-tu-ma a-na šu-zu-ub ZI.MEŠ-šú^a
in-nab-tú iḥ-lu-pu qé-reb qiš-ti
ina KU-ti^b AN.ŠÁR u ^d15 a-nar-šú-nu-ti
SAG.DU-šú-nu KU₅-is mi-iḥ-ret a-ḥa-meš

'Te-Umman, king of Elam, who in fierce battle
was wounded, Tammaritu, his eldest son,
took him by the hand, (and) to save (their) lives,
they fled. They hid in the midst of a forest.
With the encouragement of Assur and Ištar, I killed them.
Their heads I cut off in front of each other.'
(Slab 3, Rm XXXIII, SW Palace, Nineveh)²⁸⁷

Both passages narrate the beheading of the Elamite king, Te-Umman. The confusion is created by the first passage attributing the action to a common soldier as well as locating Assurbanipal in Assyria at the time, whilst the second passage attributes the beheading of Te-Umman to the Sargonid monarch. The contradiction is particularly startling as it exists upon the same series of reliefs within the same palace room. One way of reconciling the contradiction is by understanding the actions of the Assyrian army, and so each soldier, to be representative of the king's action, thus what the common soldier achieves is actually the achievement of the king.²⁸⁸ An understanding that is in keeping with the king's omnipresence is apparent in the Neo-Assyrian campaign accounts already highlighted.

What is pertinent for our current study is that Assurbanipal was inserted into the campaign and made active in the action of slaying the Elamite king in a familiar setting. This contest is unequivocally a battle between two kings, the Neo-Assyrian monarch, Assurbanipal, and the Elamite king, Te-Umman, along with his eldest son,

²⁸⁶ Gerardi 1988:29.

²⁸⁷ Gerardi 1988:31.

²⁸⁸ Bonatz (2004:94) makes the same argument from an anthropological standpoint. Assurbanipal retains the prestige of the common soldier's action, as the soldier was in his employ.

Tammaritu. It is located securely nearby a known location for the Cedar Forest, and it appears that mythology and ideology have infected the representation of royal action.²⁸⁹ The narrative invention or embellishments have the Neo-Assyrian king, who is campaigning at the Lower Sea, enter a forest and engage in a two-on-one contest where the defeated party/ies are beheaded (reminiscent of the Humbaba episode). However, there is a noticeable difference in this narrative in that the two figures, normally representative of Gilgamesh and Enkidu, are dispatched, whilst the solo figure, conventionally Humbaba, comes out victorious.

This apparent conflict can be resolved if one recalls the Sargonid attempts to relocate the Cedar Mountain. By the time of Te-Umman's assault on Neo-Assyrian hegemony, the Neo-Assyrian monarch is the king on the Cedar Mountain. He is the Gilgamesh of the end of the *Epic*, the Gilgamesh in unrivalled Uruk, the hegemonic king who has acceded to Humbaba's previously held position. The pair that arrive as challengers to the divinely sanctioned king's hegemony represent 'Gilgamesh and Enkidu figures' if successful. However, they will be presented as negative figures or usurpers if defeated, as they were ultimately unable to secure the gods' support and were acting contrary to their will. If this is followed, it is possible for the 'Humbaba figure' (more appropriately, 'the hegemonic king') to be viewed either as a positive figure who continues to enjoy the support of the gods, or as a negative figure against whom the gods have raised challengers to wipe their rule from the earth. Only the outcome will indicate the gods' will and confirm the participants in their ideological position of protagonist or antagonist. This understanding emphasises the sophistication of the royal and imperial ideology that has been detected throughout. In the Gilgamesh tradition, Humbaba is the hegemonic king who is fated to fall to the gods' chosen agent, Gilgamesh. In Assurbanipal's campaign against Te-Umman, the hegemonic king enjoys the continued support of

²⁸⁹ See Bahrani (2004; 2008:23-55) who argues that the 'historical' depiction of events in the Til-Tuba reliefs, were populated with royal and imperial ideology. This argument is based on the apparent non-linear progression and repetition of Te-Umman, specifically his severed head. Ataç's (2010) study is also instructive for the permeation of kingship mythology in Neo-Assyrian art.

the gods and crushes the evil usurpers.²⁹⁰ If Te-Ummān's campaign had been successful, perhaps we would have been presented with a narrative depicting Assurbanipal sharing the same fate as the grotesque, yet royal Humbaba. Instead, we are presented with a 'garden scene' on the walls of Assurbanipal's North Palace at Nineveh that emphasises the Sargonid king's continued favour with the gods and continued residence on his Cedar Mountain.²⁹¹

With the conceptualisation of Assurbanipal's heroic battle against Te-Ummān near the banks of the Ulai River so understood, MSS e and V₂ come to the fore. MS V₂ is a fragment of *SB Epic*, viii from Assurbanipal's library at Nineveh, whereas MS e (also a seventh-century BCE tablet) comes from the library of Qurdi-Nergal excavated at Sultantepe.²⁹² The contents of MS e align with *SB Epic*, viii, and so it has been used by George as a source for this part of the *Epic*.²⁹³ This tablet details Gilgamesh's lament over his fallen companion, Enkidu, and the resultant funeral.²⁹⁴ During this lament, Gilgamesh makes a somewhat obscure reference to the Ulai River.²⁹⁵ Gurney, Edzard, and George have suggested that this may refer to the

²⁹⁰ Te-Ummān is demonised and presented as something akin to Humbaba in Assurbanipal's inscriptions. The Elamite king is referred to as a *gallū* 'demon' making him a ready parallel for Humbaba and demonstrating the metaphoric morphology of the 'enemy' king in Mesopotamian culture (*Cylinder B*, col. iv.69-75; Luckenbill 1927:330; Gerardi 1987:133-134; Nadali 2007:68). He is also presented, just like Humbaba, as something evil in the land that the gods are active in defeating (*Cylinder B*, col. iv.84-col. vi.9; Luckenbill 1927:330-334; Gerardi 1987:135-137). Also, the discussion by Collins (2006) concerning the representation of Te-Ummān in the iconography makes a good case for the development of the enemy into a recognisable antagonist. Perhaps, Te-Ummān's prominence as an adversary was presented to emphasise the heroic elevation of Assurbanipal in his Humbaba episode.

²⁹¹ The 'garden scene' or 'banquet scene' from the North Palace, Nineveh (Fig.8; Reade 1998:87-90) depicts Assurbanipal reclining with what appears to be his queen (perhaps representative of Ishtar, the royal consort) in a garden setting. This is plausibly the *kirimāhu* 'garden' at Nineveh that was created in the image of Mt. Amanus. Hanging on a nearby tree is the severed head of Te-Ummān, making it possible to understand that after defeating the Elamite king, Assurbanipal and his queen are left relaxing and still residing on their Cedar Mountain at Nineveh. The guardian remains in post and the Cedar Mountain continued to flourish. It is worth highlighting, that the tree on which Te-Ummān's head dangles may plausibly be identified as a cedar tree. Reade (1998:88) has identified it as a pine tree, also plausible. Without an identifying caption either remains a possibility, perhaps one only needs to consider that it was supposed to represent a tree from the Cedar Forest.

²⁹² For MS V₂, see George 2003:408-409; for MS e, see George 2003:371-373; cf. Gurney 1954:90-95; for the tablets and library see, Gurney & Finkelstein 1957; Gurney & Hulin 1964; Gurney 1997; Pedersen 1998:178-180; Robson 2008:144; Robson 2013:48-50.

²⁹³ George 2003:649-657.

²⁹⁴ Cf. George 2003:484-490.

²⁹⁵ *SB Epic*, viii.18 (George 2003:650-651).

campaign to the Cedar Forest.²⁹⁶ Their instincts are evidently correct. However, instead of it recalling an eastern Cedar Mountain from the early tradition, it should be understood as an interpolation in the *Epic* brought about by the conceptualisation of Assurbanipal's Ulai River campaign. The two tablets that provide this detail date to Assurbanipal's reign and possibly shortly afterwards, whilst the locating of one tablet in Assurbanipal's library and the other in a provincial library with ties to imperial governance should leave one in little doubt.²⁹⁷ Note that MS e is also the tablet that refers to Humbaba as the mighty king of the Cedar Forest. When all of this is considered to the similarities between the lament and funeral arrangements of the *SB Epic*, viii, and the comparable composition detailing the lament and funeral for Assurbanipal's father, Esarhaddon, then the literary activities in Assurbanipal's court are heavily suggestive of interplay with the *Epic*.²⁹⁸ The significance of this cannot be understated. Not only can the *Epic* be seen to have influenced the conceptualisation of Assurbanipal campaign against the Elamite king, but Assurbanipal's campaign is seen to have altered the *Epic*. The continued significance of the *Epic* and its relationship to genuine royal action couldn't be clearer.

As with the building of 'unrivalled palaces', the parallels with the motifs of the Gilgamesh tradition concerning 'historical' campaigning, and the confirmation/transfer of royal power, are not restricted to Neo-Assyrian examples. A hymn from the Ur III period presents parallels between the conquest of Kish and the Huwawa poems. In this tradition, reference is made to Gilgamesh's conquest of Kish and defeat of its king, Enmebaragesi. The specifics should be familiar from the discussion thus far.

Compare,

'You (Gilgamesh) went out to war against the house of Kish,
Captured its seven warriors,
[And as for the king of Ki]sh, Enmebaragesi

²⁹⁶ Gurney 1954:92; Edzard 1985:54; George 2003:485n133; cf. Klein & Abraham 2000:64-65n19.

²⁹⁷ Robson 2013:48-50.

²⁹⁸ Cf. McGinnis 1987; George 2003:485.

You placed your foot upon his head [as if it were that of a snake;]
 You brought kingship from Kish to Uruk!
 (*Shulgi O*, 56-60)²⁹⁹

With,

'After the seventh terror was gone, (Gilgamesh) attacked his abode.
 He followed him like a snake on the wine- ...
 and feigning a kiss, he struck him on the cheek with open hand.'
 (*GH A*, 149-151)³⁰⁰

'History' is compressed and the transfer of kingship from Kish to Uruk is presented through a contest between Enmebaragesi and Gilgamesh. Enmebaragesi, the king of Kish, and Huwawa, the king on the Cedar Mountain, are both subdued by Gilgamesh as one would tackle a snake. Enmebaragesi is presented with the seven warriors or Sebittu, just as we would expect of the king of Kish and these warriors are captured by Gilgamesh in his campaign. This likewise parallels what I have presented for the surrender of Huwawa's auras.³⁰¹ In the passage detailing Gilgamesh's supplanting of Enmebaragesi, it is made clear that this episode brought about the transfer of kingship from Kish to Uruk. This is divinely bestowed kingship, and again parallels what I have discussed above concerning the transfer of power between Huwawa and Gilgamesh. With both narratives securely placed in an Ur III period context, the parallels are profound. They contextualise Gilgamesh's journey to the Cedar Forest and the slaying of Huwawa as a Mesopotamian transfer of divinely sanctioned royal power. Kish, the first city that the gods bestowed kingship upon after the Flood is defeated and the role is usurped by Uruk.³⁰² Enmebaragesi is conquered by Gilgamesh in a manner that appears to directly parallel his subduing of Huwawa. It is then reasonable, due to the parallels, to consider that the same understanding of the Gilgamesh and Huwawa episode should be reached at this point.

²⁹⁹ Klein 1976:278-279; George 2003:110-111; Michalowski 2003:202.

³⁰⁰ Fleming & Milstein 2010:188; cf. George 1999:158; Edzard 1991:217-218.

³⁰¹ It is hardly coincidental that the Neo-Sumerian hymn *Šulgi O* narratives both Gilgamesh's defeat of Enmebaragesi, lines 56-60, and Gilgamesh's defeat of Huwawa, lines 91-99 (Klein 1976:278-281). The presentation of both campaigns together suggestively amplifies the parallel.

³⁰² *SKL*, col.i.40-col.iii.19 (Jacobsen 1939:76-91)

One should then reconsider the utilisation of the androgynous name, Enmebaragesi, for one of Gilgamesh's sisters in *GH A*.³⁰³ Michalowski argued that the naming of Gilgamesh's sister as Enmebaragesi was meant as an imbedded joke to satirize the Sumerians' barbarous eastern neighbours through the character of Huwawa. Apparently, this jest highlighted their ignorance as the satirical Huwawa could not even distinguish between the name of a genuine princess of Uruk and a mythical king from a rival city.³⁰⁴ As appealing as this interpretation may be, Enmebaragesi represents an odd choice for a joke such as Michalowski suggests. This is because Neo-Sumerian tradition has Enmebaragesi as a campaigner to the East and conqueror of Elam. In fact, that this is specifically mentioned when Enmebaragesi appears in the *SKL* implies that he may well have taken on canonical status regarding campaigns in this direction during this period.³⁰⁵ It is therefore not clear how even the most ignorant of eastern neighbours would have been naive of a king by whom the Elamites were perceived to have been conquered. The unsuitability of Enmebaragesi for this jest is further amplified if connections between Humbaba and Humbar, as well as the Cedar Mountain and Elamite territory are maintained for the early tradition. It would actually seem to indicate ignorance on the part of the Neo-Sumerian author rather than the eastern neighbours due to his poor choice of name for Gilgamesh's sister.

Instead one could consider that the androgynous name was cleverly utilised by the author to force the audience to identify this as a contest between kings and as a conquest of a powerful rival. Just as Neo-Sumerian tradition has Enmebaragesi achieving against Elam and Gilgamesh achieving against Enmebaragesi. The imbedding of the king of Kish's name in the interactions between Gilgamesh and Huwawa may be better understood as a sort of wink to the audience, emphasising the parallel under discussion. The androgyny of the 'en' enables the author of the

³⁰³ *GH A*, 139; Edzard 1991:211. The androgynous characteristic of the name is provided by the 'en' at the beginning that may be translated as 'priest' or 'priestess'. Shaffer (1983:311ff) has argued that this reference to a female Enmebaragesi in *GH A* may represent evidence that the semi-mythical king, Enmebaragesi, was actually a woman and legendary queen not king. Michalowski (2003:196ff) seems to reject Shaffer's assessment and argues for a fully mythical figure with the 'en' actually initially meaning 'king' in Sumerian Uruk.

³⁰⁴ Michalowski 2003:205-207; Taylor 2010:360.

³⁰⁵ *SKL*, col. ii.35-40; Jacobsen 1939:82-85.

GH A reference such licence. Gilgamesh is conquering Huwawa and seizing divinely bestowed kingship here, just as he was presented doing against Enmebaragesi and Kish. The atypical Nippur duplicate of the *SKL* published by Klein may be understood to support this assessment.³⁰⁶ This fragment attributes the defeat of Enmebaragesi to Gilgamesh's predecessor, Dumuzi, an attribution absent in the *SKL* published by Jacobsen.³⁰⁷ Further, it states that Dumuzi captured Enmebaragesi single-handedly, implying a one-on-one heroic contest familiar from our discussion so far concerning Gilgamesh's defeat of Humbaba. Klein persuasively argues that the variation between the two kinglists can be explained by the *SKL* published by Jacobsen being identified as a product of the Ur III court and the Nippur duplicate representing a slightly earlier version from the reign of Utuḫegal of Uruk. Klein also argues that Shulgi and the court poets of the Ur III period suppressed the detail concerning Dumuzi's conquest of Enmebaragesi to transfer the achievement to their patron ancestor, Gilgamesh.³⁰⁸

This would further support the parallelism between the defeat of the two opponents, Enmebaragesi and Huwawa. Both are attributed to Gilgamesh and both are continuously intertextualised in the Neo-Sumerian tradition. Therefore, it is reasonable to consider that we are dealing with parallel episodes, one of myth and the other of 'history'. I have written 'history' cautiously here, as despite my objections to his interpretation of how Enmebaragesi was utilised in *GH A*, I find Michalowski's arguments that Enmebaragesi should be understood as representing a fully fictitious character infinitely plausible.³⁰⁹ If Enmebaragesi is considered wholly mythical, just as Huwawa is, then it is even more comprehensible why we should have variant traditions of his conquest as each subsequent king must ideologically conquer the mythological and archaic antagonists. The defeat of Enmebaragesi and Kish by either Dumuzi or Gilgamesh mythologizes the challenge of hegemony and the transfer of royal power from one seat to the next, just as I have argued for the Gilgamesh and Huwawa episode. Thus, entirely comparable

³⁰⁶ BT 14; Klein 1991.

³⁰⁷ Jacobsen 1939.

³⁰⁸ Klein 1991:127-129.

³⁰⁹ Michalowski 2003:196ff.

challenges and conquests by Gilgamesh come into view via the Ur III creation or relation of 'history'. It is important to note here, that we are not dealing with an extra-Mesopotamian enemy in the comparable Enmebaragesi episode, but the transfer from one seat to the other in Mesopotamia itself. Thus, emphasising that the comparable Humbaba episode is better understood as detailing the transfer of hegemony and divinely sanctioned kingship, rather than simple the defeating of a foreign enemy at the limits of the imperial domain.

Therefore, from the discussion thus far we can see that examples of intertextuality between the motifs of the Humbaba episode within the Gilgamesh tradition and the narration of royal action during the Neo-Sumerian and Neo-Assyrian periods clearly exist. We can argue with a degree of certainty that this was direct emulation. Additionally, we can confidently state that the Gilgamesh tradition fully engages with Mesopotamian kingship ideology, and that the accounts of 'real' royal action by Mesopotamian monarchs were imbued with comparable mythology and ideology. It is evident that each influenced the other. As genuine kings of later times attempted to emulate and surpass their impressive predecessors, their actions would have been presented in comparable terms. This would have plausibly led to a bonding of real and mythical traditions adapting the 'history' and the mythology with each contextualisation.

Chapter Four

Alexander the Great and the slaying of Humbaba: a Mesopotamian contextualisation of the battle for hegemony

The Neo-Sumerian and Neo-Assyrian examples in the previous chapter have shown that there was a bridge between the literature and genuine historical action. The Gilgamesh tradition was heavily imbued with Mesopotamian royal ideology, and it clearly permeated the presentation of genuine action for kings of Mesopotamia. Therefore, as Alexander became a king of Mesopotamia, it is possible that his 'historical' narratives exhibit the impact of a similar contextualisation and comparable intertextuality. This would serve to emphasise continuity during this period of change, but it would also help to ideologically establish Alexander as a Mesopotamian monarch proper through his engagement with long-lived tradition. Of course, when considering the Alexander narratives one does not need to go to great lengths to make the case for myth imbued accounts. It can easily be argued that the Alexander narratives consistently occupy the blurred environs between history and myth.³¹⁰ Therefore, the focus of this chapter will be to identify and collate a series of references within the Alexander narratives that can be plausibly and convincingly explained as indicative of the conceptualisation of a 'Humbaban' campaign for Alexander. This will be achieved through the analysis of the Siege of Tyre within Alexander's narrative tradition. Through this I will present Alexander campaigning at the Upper Sea, within the Cedar Forest, and to the Cedar Mountain. I will demonstrate that the sun god occupied a comparable role within the tradition, and the perception that Alexander's kingship was likewise elevated through a transfer of power at this point.

³¹⁰ For example, see Carlsen, Due, Due & Poulsen 1993; Bosworth & Baynham 2000.

4.1. Tyre as the Cedar Mountain

However, before embarking on the specific parallels present within the Alexander narratives it is necessary to briefly establish the case for contextualising Tyre in this way. A simple and rather obvious point is one of location. Tyre is undoubtedly located at the Upper Sea. Therefore, leading a campaign to Tyre and the conquest of Tyre may be understood as representative of asserting dominion to this frontier of Mesopotamian hegemony. This conceptualisation of Tyre as a frontier location would not be a unique innovation of the Alexander tradition as it was already present in the inscriptions of Assurbanipal. It was stated that the Sargonid king had conquered as far as Tyre in the Upper Sea and Dilmun in the Lower Sea.³¹¹ Tyre and Dilmun were presented as a pair, and the poles of Assurbanipal's conquest and dominion. It is clear from the discussion thus far that the Cedar Mountain represented conceptual limits of conquest and hegemony for the Mesopotamian monarch at both the Upper and Lower Seas. As Assurbanipal's inscription presents Tyre and Dilmun as representative of these limits, it is possible to consider at this point Dilmun as the Cedar Mountain at the Lower Sea and Tyre its equivalent at the Upper Sea.³¹²

That Tyre and Dilmun are islands should not cause us too much concern.³¹³ Firstly, Tyre was not strictly an island after Alexander, as a causeway connected it to the mainland. This was a reality that was both threatened and realised by Alexander in his narrative tradition,

Itaque: "Vos quidem," inquit, "fiducia loci, quod insulam incolitis, pedestrem hunc exercitum spernitis, sed brevi ostendam in continenti vos esse."

³¹¹ *Yale Cylinder*, 970; it should be noted that this cylinder comes from Gilgamesh's native Uruk (Luckenbill 1927:373-375); *Assurbanipal* 19, lines 8-9 (Frame 1995:226).

³¹² It has been previously argued by Kramer (1963:281-282) that Dilmun may be considered as a plausible location for the Cedar Forest/Mountain within the Gilgamesh tradition.

³¹³ The focus of this discussion will mainly be on the pertinent city of Tyre. However, I will return briefly to discuss Dilmun below in relation to its designation as Tylos/Tyros in the second half of the First Millennium BCE (Bowersock 1986:309-406; Potts 1990b:125-153). For Dilmun (identified as the modern island of Bahrain), see Crawford 1998.

‘Accordingly he said: “You indeed, relying on your situation, because you live on an island, despise this army of foot-soldiers, but I will soon show you that you are on the mainland.”’ (QCR, iv.i.5)

And

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα τοῦ χώματος συνάψαντος τῷ τείχει καὶ τῆς πόλεως χερρονήσου γενομένης πολλοὺς καὶ μεγάλους ἀγῶνας συνέβαινε γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὴν τειχομαχίαν.

‘Now the causeway had reached the wall and made the city mainland, and sharp fighting took place along the walls.’ (Diod. xvii.43.5)

This anchoring of Tyre to the mainland became a more and more substantial and permanent feature as it subsequently silted up, but there has been some debate regarding its state of completion during the siege.³¹⁴ Regardless of this discussion concerning the reality of the mole, the concern of this study is that in the narrative tradition Tyre was converted from an island to part of the mainland during Alexander’s conquest of the city.³¹⁵ Therefore, the city-mountain metaphor discussed above for Humbaba’s abode can apply to Tyre within the Alexander tradition and subsequent to his conquest of the city without any island-related topography issues obstructing the comparison (i.e. Tyre may metaphorically represent a mountain on the mainland).

However, secondly and perhaps more importantly, the distinction between islands and mountains was not always clear or stable in a Mesopotamian context. It is possible to detect a sort of island/mountain hybridity within cuneiform narrative,

³¹⁴ Tarn (1948:ii.120-122) rejected Diodorus’ claim that the mole reached the wall during the siege, however Bosworth (1975:16-20; 1980:250-251; also Stewart 1987) has argued to the contrary even citing its connection in Arrian, *Anab.* ii.22.6. See also Jidejian 1969:8; 69-80; Bikai & Bikai 1987:71-73; Bikai 1992:21-22 on Alexander’s mole at Tyre, but note that as yet the archaeology has not strictly confirmed the narrative details concerning the mole for either side. This is mainly due to the inability to definitely locate Alexander’s mole within the current isthmus.

³¹⁵ Cf. Dionysus I of Syracuse’s siege of the Phoenician island city of Motya, c.398/7 BCE (Diod. xiv.47.4-53.5). Numerous parallels may be drawn between the accounts of the two sieges, including the use of a mole to advance siege engines against a fortified island city. This led Cartledge (2004:147-148) to propose that the mole employed by Dionysus I’s during his siege of Motya may have been the inspiration behind the parallel tactic utilised by Alexander at Tyre. Macnamara (1974:29) more cautiously and possibly more securely, proposed that the narrative accounts of the sieges, both present in Diodorus, may have influenced each other. Note that a causeway at Motya between the island and the mainland supposedly pre-dated Dionysus I’s siege (Macnamara 1974:27-30).

something that the *SB Epic* directly engages with, in its version of the Flood narrative,

ki-ma ú-ri mit-ḥu-rat ú-šal-lu
ap-ti nap-pa-šá-am-ma šētu(ud.da) im-ta-qut eli(ugu) dūr(bàd) ap-pi-ia
uk-tam-mi-is-ma at-ta-šab a-bak-ki
eli(ugu) dūr(bàd) ap-pi-ia il-la-ka di-ma-a-a
ap-pa-li-is kib-ra-a-ti pa-tu tâmti(a.ab.ba)
a-na 14^{ta.àm} i-te-la-a na-gu-ú
a-na šadī(kur) ni-muš i-te-mid^{giš} eleppu(má)
šadû(kur)^{ú kur} ni-muš^{giš} eleppa(má) iṣ-bat-ma a-na na-a-ši ul id-din

'The flood plain was level like a roof.
 I opened a vent and sunlight fell on the side of my face.
 I fell to my knees and sat there weeping,
 the tears streaming down the side of my face.
 I scanned the shores, the edge of the sea,
 in fourteen places emerged a landmass (island).
 On Mount Nimuš the boat ran aground,
 Mount Nimuš held the boat fast and did not let it move.'
 (*SB Epic*, xi.136-143)³¹⁶

As the water levels from the Flood receded the first outcrops of land came into view. These *nagû* 'islands' in the narrative were actually the mountains that were the first to emerge from the water. With the water level still too high to see the attached mainland, these mountains appeared as land in the midst of the sea.³¹⁷

The conclusion seems to be that it is possible to understand islands in a Mesopotamian context as mountains in the sea. This was not limited to the topographical identification of islands and mountains, but readily engages with their deployment in metaphor. As a city, temple, or palace can be conceptualised as a mountain, naturally when in the midst of the sea it is possible to understand an island city as a city or abode on a mountain.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ George 2003:712-713.

³¹⁷ CAD xi.1.123. This ambiguity related to expressing 'islands' in Akkadian, often resulting in land 'in the sea' *ina qereb tâmti* is discussed more fully by Horowitz (1988:156-158; 2011:30-33).

³¹⁸ Cf. *Enki's Journey to Nibru* where Enki's city, Eridug is said to be an artfully built mountain that floats on the water (lines 72-74) and to have risen up out of the ground like a mountain (line 121); Al-Fouadi 1969:69-85; Kramer & Maier 1989:69-74; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:332-333. Eridug was an ancient Sumerian city located in Southern Mesopotamia. It was the location of Enki's temple, supposedly constructed by the god and risen from the depths to its currently marsh location (Kramer 1961:62-63; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:330-333). These descriptions of Enki's temple and city help emphasise the ambiguous employment of metaphor in Mesopotamian culture, and reconcile the identification of islands, mountains, cities and temples with one another.

This conceptualisation of islands means that it is then possible to understand the city of Tyre as the Cedar Mountain even before the causeway has converted it to a part of the mainland. This identification may have been further supported by certain geo-political and economical realities. Tyre's political hegemony in Phoenicia and its timber trade during the First Millennium BCE creates a political and cultural environment where it is easy to understand how Tyre may have been considered to represent the guardian of the cedar and even seen as the Cedar Mountain itself.³¹⁹ Logically, it follows that if the city of Tyre can be conceptualised as the Cedar Mountain, it is not only the city that can take on the role of guardian in narrative, but naturally any ruler *in situ* in the city.

4.1.2 Nebuchadnezzar II's 'Humbaban' campaign

These are exactly the circumstances that surface in a Neo-Babylonian period conceptualisation of a campaign against Tyre and its king extant in the biblical book of Ezekiel.³²⁰ In this passage it is stated that the king of Tyre has been in Eden, the garden of god, and that he has been on god's mountain. He is identified as the anointed cherub (guardian) and it is stated that god has become displeased with him and will bring a rival to expel him. Thus Tyre is seen to have been conceptualised as the garden and mountain of the gods, just as we have been discussing for the Cedar Mountain, and the Tyrian king resides there as its guardian just like Humbaba. Further, like Humbaba, the Tyrian king has lost the favour of the god and a rival is being called to remove him from his lofty position. The parallels with Gilgamesh's campaign against Humbaba are overwhelming, and until now

³¹⁹ Note how Humbaba was conceptualised as both the guardian and a mountain in one of Gilgamesh's dreams en route to the Cedar Forest (OB Schoyen², 4-22; George 2003:232-235), therefore making it possible for the mountain city to be understood as the narrative guardian as well as the mountain itself. During the Neo-Assyrian period, see Oded (1974) and Watson-Treumann (2000/2001) for political interactions with Tyre and restrictions upon its timber trade. Note specifically, Letter XII of the Nimrud letters, which taxes the Tyrian timber trade and restricts its sale abroad (Saggs 1955:127-130). More generally for Tyre, see Katzenstein (1973; 1997). It should be noted that during the Persian period Tyre was demoted below Sidon in Phoenicia, but elevated back to the most powerful Phoenician city towards the end of the empire and before Alexander's invasion (Katzenstein 1979).

³²⁰ Ezekiel 28.12-19.

these ideological and mythological sections of Ezekiel's oracle against Tyre have defied a definitive explanation that doesn't attribute Ezekiel with excessive originality.

The difficulties have arisen from a focus on Tyre's political and economic relationship with Judaea and a too literal interpretation of the mythical elements. For example, Eden and God's Mountain in Ezekiel are simply how one would express the Mesopotamian divine abode on the Cedar Mountain in the biblical tradition. It should not simply be considered in relation to the contents of the Book of Genesis and the Hebrew tradition of Eden.³²¹ Further the oracle against Tyre in Ezekiel should not only be considered in the context of contemporary Judean enmity against the Phoenician city.³²² Both of these are relevant considerations, but it is Babylon that is going to war with Tyre in the oracle, and it is Nebuchadnezzar who will topple the impious Tyrian king. This is the context of the passage and the oracle, Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against Tyre.³²³ Therefore, the description of Tyre, the king of Tyre, and the prophecy of their mutual destruction in Ezekiel are better understood when considered as stemming from Babylonian ideological conceptualisation of a Babylonian campaign.³²⁴ Ezekiel was ideally placed to be directly exposed to this and influenced by it.³²⁵ The Judaea-centric and interpolated material that also populates the passages would naturally crystallise around the Mesopotamian core due to the bias of the author and the characteristics of the source.³²⁶ Therefore, surviving in biblical literature, we have evidence for the conceptualisation of a 'Humbaban' campaign for Nebuchadnezzar II centred on his siege of Tyre.

³²¹ For examples of this, see Stordalen 2000:332-363; Arbel 2005:128; cf. Wilson 1987:215-216 for the identification of the 'garden of god' and 'the holy mountain of god' with the Jerusalem temple.

³²² For examples of this, see Corral 2002; Strong 2014.

³²³ Cf. Ezekiel 26-29; Unger 1926:316.

³²⁴ Cf. Sweeney 2014:135-141 for further potential parallels with Mesopotamian myth.

³²⁵ Cf. Vanderhooft 2014; Stokl 2015.

³²⁶ For later additions to the oracle against Tyre, see Wilson 1987:211-212.

4.2 Alexander enters the Cedar Forest and his Humbaba episode

With Tyre conceptually positioned thus, we can now re-evaluate certain details within the Alexander narratives concerning his siege of the city. This is to evaluate whether Tyre was contextualised in this way in the Alexander tradition. In Curtius' account of Alexander's siege of Tyre, we are presented with a dream that creates a familiar setting,

Cumque unus e civibus in contione indicasset, oblatam esse per somnum sibi speciem Apollinis, quem eximia religione colerent, urbem deserentis molemque a Macedonibus in salo iactam in silvestrem saltum esse mutatam...

'And when one of their citizens declared in a public assembly that a vision of Apollo, whom they worshipped with special veneration, had appeared to him in his sleep as deserting the city, and that the causeway which the Macedonians had constructed in the sea had changed into a forest tract...'
(QCR iv.iii.21)³²⁷

When first approached, one could consider the detail of the mole changing into a forest tract as an extension of the island of Tyre becoming part of the mainland motif. It clearly is, however that does not explain the narrative embellishment. In the passages quoted further above from Diodorus and Curtius concerning Tyre's anchoring to the mainland, no such flourish occurs. Further, nowhere in the narrative tradition is it intimated that the mole is extending out of a forest or towards one. Therefore, the forest tract of the mole from the vision is not simply an extension of the mainland or the island, but a distinct, standalone, woodland feature connecting the island of Tyre with the mainland. This transformation of the mole is the strongest indication of the relevant contextualisation. Alexander's promise to convert Tyre to the mainland is realised through the citizen's dream, but the mole's metamorphosis into a forest tract creates a 'Humbaban' landscape for Alexander's conquest of the city. The Macedonian king's path to Tyre is no longer

³²⁷ An account of the dream of Apollo's desertion is also provided by Plutarch (*Alexander* 24.3) and Diodorus (xvii.41.7-8). It should be noted that in Plutarch's narrative it is stated that many Tyrians had this dream rather than just one. The conversion of the mole into a forest tract is currently unique to Curtius.

presented as across the sea, but into the forest. Thus, a scene comes into view of a campaign into the Cedar Forest against the Cedar Mountain.³²⁸

4.2.2 The patronage of the sun god

That this metamorphosis of the mole into a forest tract is mentioned in the same breath as the desertion by Apollo is surely significant. It would seem that the transformation was the work of the sun god or at least enabled by his switch from one side to the other. What may be inferred from Curtius is confirmed by Plutarch, namely that the sun god is switching allegiances and transferring his patronage to Alexander.³²⁹ Thus we have the familiar abandonment of the Cedar Mountain and its guardian by the sun god. This would then readily parallel the function of the sun god in the Gilgamesh tradition, as he opens the path to the Cedar Mountain and enables a successful campaign. The unconquerable Tyre and imperceivable path to victory are no more as Apollo's protection and patronage become the agency of the besiegers rather than the besieged. A mythical landscape is constructed and the Cedar Mountain is accessed. This enables Alexander to undertake the contest, defeat the incumbent on the Mountain, and rise as the sun god's new favourite and chosen successor. That Alexander attributes his success in the Tyre campaign to Apollo's patronage may be understood by the epithet subsequently attached to the god by the Macedonian monarch in Diodorus' narrative, Ἀπολλῶ φιλαλέξανδρον 'Apollo, lover of Alexander'.³³⁰ Therefore, in each of our subject traditions, our protagonists' beneficent relationships with the sun god are cemented and

³²⁸ Romane (1987:88-90) has argued that Alexander positioned himself on the mole during the final assault on the city and launched the attack from there. He argues for confusion in the sources due to Arrian's condensing of his source (cf. Bosworth 1980:253, who also concludes that Arrian's account has been condensed here), which has led to the understanding that Alexander led the attack on the sea wall in person instead. The relevant passages in the narratives are: Arrian, *Anab.* ii.23.4-6; Diod. xvii.46.1-2; and QCR iv.4.10-12. Although I am not sure that we can completely follow Romane's assessment of Arrian's account, perhaps even Diodorus', he does appear to be comfortably correct concerning Curtius' account. Therefore it is interesting that, in our source which presents the 'into the forest' landscape, it is possible that we are presented with a repositioned Alexander, who takes the correct narrative path for the final assault.

³²⁹ Plut. *Alexander* 24.3.

³³⁰ Diod. XVII.46.6; cf. Plut. *Alexander* 24.4, where Apollo is called an Ἀλεξανδριστὴν 'Alexandrist' by the Tyrians when his desertion to Alexander was revealed.

exemplified through campaigning to the Cedar Mountain to rid the land of a guardianship displeasing to the god.³³¹

4.2.3 Alexander's motive for attacking Tyre

It is therefore possible to draw the comparison between the Gilgamesh and Alexander traditions for this episode from the dream in Curtius alone. However, further exegesis of the Alexander narratives will demonstrate that the parallels run much deeper. As with the Gilgamesh tradition, it may be useful to begin with the motive, as the reasons given for Alexander's siege and conquest of Tyre warrant further discussion. Arrian provides us with a speech by Alexander to his commanders emphasising the practical reasons for the conquest of Tyre. This centres on the breaking of Persian naval supremacy through the subjugation of Phoenicia, and the resultant stability it will provide for Macedonian operations in Egypt, Asia Minor, Greece, and into the interior.³³² However, Bosworth has argued that the outright conquest of Tyre was strategically unnecessary. He argues that Tyre's obedience could have been assured and negative impact marginalised by a Macedonian garrison on the mainland and the enmity of neighbours such as Sidon.³³³ Although I do not agree with the assessment of Bosworth *et alii*, what is being engaged with here does bear relevance to our discussion. This is the initial interactions between Alexander and the Tyrians that bring about the siege in the narratives.

³³¹ See Plut. *Alexander* 24.3, where we are told that Apollo is leaving the city as he is displeased with the actions of those within it.

³³² Arrian, *Anab.* ii.17. For problems with speeches in Arrian, see Bosworth 1988b:94-134; Bloedow & Bloedow 1994. It should be noted that the reliability or unreliability of speeches in Arrian does not necessarily impinge on the validity of the assessment of strategy. This rational explanation for the conquest of Tyre seems infinitely plausible and has been sensibly followed by some in scholarship, e.g. Garvin 2003:106-111; Briant 2002:828; 2010:47-48; Lane Fox 2004:178-181; Heckel 2008:65-67; 2009:33-35; Bowden 2014:41. Note that Plutarch (*Alex.* 24.2) also states that coastal conquest was the strategy.

³³³ Bosworth 1988a:65; Bloedow & Bloedow 1994; Bloedow 1998; Worthington 1999:44-45; cf. QCR iv.4.15-16 where it is claimed that the Sidonians fighting on Alexander's side secretly rescue 15,000 Tyrians as the city is taken.

When Alexander enters Phoenicia, we are told that all except Tyre readily submitted to his rule.³³⁴ Whether the situation on the ground was as easy as claimed may be brought into question by the narratives of Justin, Curtius, and Arrian, which seem to indicate factions supporting different sides in the immediate and adjacent regions.³³⁵ Nevertheless, we are presented with a situation in the narrative tradition where eventually Tyre stands alone as the only obstacle to Alexander's advance and conquest of Phoenicia.³³⁶ Therefore, it is possible that Tyre may be identified in the Alexander narratives as the guardian of the region. As I have shown, this was a region synonymous with the Cedar Mountains and Upper Sea, supporting an identification of Tyre as the guarding obstacle that must be bested for Alexander to take possession of the territory. However, it should be noted that we are not universally told that the Tyrians were belligerent. Exceptions exist in the accounts of Justin, Arrian, and Curtius, where we are told that Tyrian envoys came out to meet Alexander offering gifts, friendship, and promising a relationship ranging from vassal status or alliance to neutrality.³³⁷ Alexander appears to accept these overtures and requests to enter the island city of Tyre and sacrifice to the god, Herakles, in his temple.³³⁸ This request is denied by the Tyrians

³³⁴ Plut. *Alexander* 24.2; Diod. xvii.40.2-3.

³³⁵ Justin xi.10.6-9; QCR iv.1.15-26; iv.2.1; Arrian, *Anab.* ii.14-15. Burstein (2007:140-141) highlights that we have very little information in the sources concerning the conquest of Phoenicia and Palestine beyond the sieges of Tyre and Gaza. See Kuhrt (2007:438-445) and Briant (2002:828-832) for a discussion of contemporary events and an extended view of related activity in Syria and Asia Minor. It should be noted that the need to change the king in Sidon due to the king's forced surrender (QCR iv.1.15-26; cf. Justin xi.10.6-9, who indicates that this change of ruler was not unique to Sidon), and the interlude before the Phoenician and Cypriot fleets were fully at Alexander's disposal (Arrian, *Anab.* ii.20.1-3) may indicate that initially more widespread opposition was maintained against the Macedonian invaders.

³³⁶ In the Pseudo-Callisthenes narratives, Tyre likewise stands alone as the sole obstacle to Alexander's advance in the region (e.g. *A-text*; *beta*; *gamma*, i.35.1-5; Stoneman 2007:80-83; 194-197; 326-329; *Syriac*, i.35; Budge 1889:44-45; *Armenian*, 99-100; Wolohojian 1969:57).

³³⁷ In Justin (xi.10.10) the deputation is presented as simply congratulating Alexander; in Curtius (iv.2.2) we are told that the Tyrians are more likely to accept an alliance than subjugation; and in Arrian at first it appears that the envoys are offering an alliance with Tyre as a sort of vassal state (*Anab.* ii.15.6), but this is clarified or adjusted in light of Alexander's request to enter the city to a position of neutrality (*Anab.* ii.16.7). It should be noted that in Diodorus (xvii.40.3) the Tyrians remain loyal to the Persian cause.

³³⁸ The god was known to the Phoenicians as Melqart (for Melqart, see Bonnet 1988). The association between Melqart and Herakles is evident before Alexander's campaign, for example see Herodotus (ii.44), where Melqart is identified as the Tyrian Herakles. It should be noted that Herodotus differentiates between the divine Herakles of Tyre and other regions, and the heroic ancestor of the Macedonian royal house (cf. Arrian, *Anab.* ii.16 for comparable differentiation).

and Alexander is instructed to sacrifice to the god on the mainland at the sanctuary in Old Tyre.³³⁹

This refusal by the Tyrians of Alexander's request angers the Macedonian king and ignites the siege in the narratives. It has been argued that the Tyrians had to refuse Alexander, as his admission into the god's sanctuary to sacrifice would have been tantamount to confirming his sovereignty over the city.³⁴⁰ If this was during the 'awakening of Melqart' festival as Bosworth suggests, then it seems reasonable that Alexander's entrance into the temple and sacrifice at this time would have positioned him unmistakably as king.³⁴¹ However, there is an ongoing debate in scholarship regarding the nature of the festival and whether it pre-dated the Macedonian invasion. The discussions centre on the translation of ἔγερσις in Josephus' narratives and exactly to what this is referring. ἔγερσις is translatable as 'raising' or 'awakening', but the debate splinters at whether this refers to the raising of the temple to Melqart, or the awakening of the god. Therefore, we are presented with the possibility of two alternative festivals. One would be an annual celebration of the raising of the temple, whilst the other would annually undertake the ritual of awakening of the god.³⁴²

Fortunately, for the purposes of this study we do not need to conclude in either direction. Whether the festival celebrated the raising of the temple or the god, the royal prominence in either festival would be maintained. Melqart was the chief god of the city and was significantly associated with the king. His name is epithetical,

Alexander's emulation of, and association with, his heroic ancestor has been discussed in chapter two.

³³⁹ Justin xi.10.10-11; QCR iv.2.1-4. In Arrian (ii.15.6-16) there is no mention of the instruction regarding the sanctuary in Old Tyre. In Diodorus (xvii.40.2) we are only informed of Alexander's desire to sacrifice to the Tyrian Herakles and that the Tyrians barred him from entering the city.

³⁴⁰ Wilcken 1932:109; Bosworth 1988a:65; Heckel 2008:66.

³⁴¹ Curtius (iv.2.10) states that envoys from Carthage were in Tyre at the commencement of the siege for an annual festival; cf. Josephus (*Ant.* viii.5.3; *Apion* i.18). The pertinent detail in Josephus is the dating of the initiation of Hiram's activities during the 10th century BCE to the month of Peritius (Jan/Feb), supposedly the same time of year that Alexander arrived at Tyre. Josephus identifies Menander (of Ephesus) as his source.

³⁴² For example, *understanding it as the erecting of the temple* Katzenstein 1973:91-93; Rawlings 2005:175-176; *understanding it as the awakening of the god* Lipinski 1970; Teixidor 1983:248-250; Mettinger 2001:88-91.

literally meaning 'king/lord of the city'.³⁴³ This means that a unique and exclusive connection between the divine and mortal kings of Tyre is inescapable. Thus participation in a festival of either nature, or sacrificing in the sanctuary during it, would likely represent a symbolic elevation of Alexander to king of Tyre.³⁴⁴ Further, if either festival existed in Tyre prior to Alexander's arrival, then it seems unlikely that Alexander would have been ignorant of it and the consequences of his request, especially when we consider the allies recently incorporated from the rest of Phoenicia.³⁴⁵ In fact, in Curtius we are told that Alexander's desire to sacrifice in the sanctuary of the Tyrian Herakles was at the behest of an oracle.³⁴⁶

When addressing this detail Bloedow bemoaned the apparent lack of information concerning the origin, date and content of the oracle.³⁴⁷ Radet went further and hypothesized that the dutiful Alexander was sent on a recovery mission by the head of the Delphic Amphictyonic Council.³⁴⁸ Radet's theory derives from an identification of the cult statue of Apollo at Tyre with one taken as booty from Gela and dedicated by the Carthaginians in the city. This leads Radet to conclude that Apollo's desertion was due to his status as a foreign (Greek) god, who was fleeing his captors.³⁴⁹ This assessment is based upon passages from Curtius and Diodorus, and although it appears to represent a valid Sicilian contextualisation, generally it

³⁴³ *Milk/Melek* 'lord/king' and *qart* 'city' (Katzenstein 1973:86-93; Clifford 1990:57-60).

³⁴⁴ Consider that in Josephus (*Ant.* viii.5.3; *Apion* i.18), Hiram I undertook the building of the temple to Melqart, and potentially initiated the 'awakening of the god' upon his accession after his father's, king Abibaal's death. This seems to support the identification of this celebration with dynastic or royal succession emphasising this understanding of the consequences of Alexander's request in the narratives.

³⁴⁵ Hamilton 1973:71; Heckel 2008:66; for an ignorant Alexander, see Wilcken 1932:109. Note that Rawlings (2005:175) doubts the existence of a rebirth of Melqart festival and questions Carthaginian involvement if one was in place. As Curtius is the only one to mention the festival, and in Josephus his information is sourced via the Hellenistic author, Menander of Ephesus, Rawlings' caution is understandable. I see no reason why a festival of the nature of at least one of those under discussion could not have had a long antiquity in Tyre. However, that it coincided with the timing of Alexander's arrival should be considered sceptically. This should either encourage us to reconsider the timing of Alexander's arrival at Tyre or the timing of the festival in the sources. Although it is to be expected due to the time period that our sources come from, the use of the Macedonian month name, Peritius, does not engender confidence.

³⁴⁶ QCR iv.2.3.

³⁴⁷ Bloedow 1998:271.

³⁴⁸ Radet 1925:58.

³⁴⁹ Radet 1925:51-58.

represents a clear misunderstanding of the sun god in the narratives of the siege.³⁵⁰ The god identified as Apollo by the Greeks is simply a Hellenizing of a Phoenician solar deity, likely Reshep or possibly Baal-Shamem.³⁵¹ Radet's interpretation directly contradicts the general presentation of the sources, as Plutarch is quite clear that Apollo is switching sides due to displeasure with Tyrian actions.³⁵² Curtius states that Apollo was worshipped with special veneration by the Tyrians.³⁵³ It is clear across all three sources that the statue was only bound when the god's intentions to desert the Tyrian cause were highlighted.³⁵⁴ Thus, initially the sun god was not a captive or considered hostile, and therefore it is difficult to reconcile Radet's rescue mission.³⁵⁵

Further, Bloedow seems to have noticed an ambiguity that Radet missed, namely that we are not informed when and how Alexander came by this oracle. Both scholars could have been served by consulting the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives. When advancing towards Tyre, we are told that the Tyrians block Alexander's way in accordance with an ancient oracle. Compare,

'The Tyrians resisted him (Alexander) and did not permit his passing through their city, in conformity with an ancient oracle from a certain god, which had been delivered to them in this fashion "If a king pass through the territory of your city, the city will fall under his power." Thus they resisted so as not to allow Alexander to enter.'
(*Armenian*, 99)³⁵⁶

With,

'Because the Tyrians had heard from Apollo the augur, "When a mighty king shall march through the plain of Tyre, Tyre shall be taken away from its deep place," the Tyrians of their own accord promptly drew up in battle array against Alexander, and fought with him, and slew many men of Alexander's host, and would not allow them to enter the city.'
(*Syriac*, i.35)³⁵⁷

³⁵⁰ QCR iv.3.22; Diod. xiii.108.2-5.

³⁵¹ *Baal-Shamem* (Katzenstein 1973:86-93); *Reshep* (Atkinson 1980:305-306); strangely, Radet (1925:54) is aware of the identification with Reshep.

³⁵² Plut. *Alex.* 24.3.

³⁵³ QCR iv.3.21.

³⁵⁴ QCR iv.3.21-22; Plut. *Alex.* 24.3-4; Diod. xvii.41.7-8.

³⁵⁵ Despite these problems, Radet is followed by Tarn (1948:120).

³⁵⁶ Wolohojian 1969:57.

³⁵⁷ Budge 1889:44.

According to the oracle in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, by allowing a (foreign) king to enter the city of Tyre the inhabitants would cede sovereignty to him.³⁵⁸

There are some conspicuous details here that require addressing. With the exception of the *Syriac*, there appears to be no conception of Tyre as an island in these narratives. Even in the *Syriac*, it is only understood through the 'Tyre shall be taken away from its deep place' part of the oracle, whereas the battle seems to point to a city on the mainland. This may be explained due to the causeway that would have led to Tyre no longer being understood as an island as the tradition progressed. Tyre's original island nature would not be evident or obvious to later authors, opening up the possibility of a mainland siege being conceptualised in some versions. Yet its island status being referenced in the oracle enables us to consider that this detail persists from an earlier or more accurate version of the tradition (the lost *delta* perhaps).

If so, then it is possible that the attribution of the oracle to Apollo, more generally the sun god, was also an earlier detail transmitted within the tradition and only re-surfacing in the *Syriac* (again potentially, via *delta*). Although we cannot connect the detail in the *Syriac* for certain with the oracle mentioned in Curtius, it does provide a possible answer to Bloedow that without these narratives we would not have. The sun god is again presented as significant in inspiring the action and deciding the outcome. Whether this is understood as profitable instruction to Alexander or a decreed destiny for the city, the sun god is presented as active in the transfer of power on the Cedar Mountain. Further, in familiar circumstances we are presented with our protagonist being instructed by the sun god upon how to achieve his victory.

To what degree Alexander is aware of this oracle in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives is apparent. After being barred from the city by the Tyrians due to the ancient oracle, Alexander sends an aggressive letter stating his intent to storm Tyre. This culminates in Alexander stating,

³⁵⁸ Cf. *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, i.35.2 (*A-text*; *beta*; *gamma*) for comparable oracles and Tyrian actions (Stoneman 2007:80-81; 194-195; 326-327).

'And the divine oracle that has been given you is also true. For I shall pass through your city.'

(*Armenian*, 100)³⁵⁹

This is intriguing, as it is not exactly clear how we should understand this detail. Just as with Curtius, we are left wondering when Alexander became aware of this oracle. It doesn't seem plausible that the Tyrians would readily offer this sort of information to an approaching conqueror. Further, the narrative doesn't indicate that this is part of a back-and-forth dialogue between Alexander and the Tyrians, but instead it is presented in a letter sent with messengers to Tyre after the first battle. Unlike in Curtius the oracle's ancient status precludes the understanding that Alexander was the direct recipient of the prophecy. However, the detail in Curtius does not preclude the oracle in his narrative from being ancient. In both the Curtius and *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, it is possible to understand the oracle as delivered to the Tyrians and simply that Alexander has knowledge of it. It would appear that we are presented with a knowledgeable Alexander across the narrative tradition.

Thus the request to sacrifice to the Tyrian Herakles made in the Greco-Roman 'histories' should be understood as simply a device for gaining said access. Instead of considering Alexander ignorant and simply desiring to honour his ancestral god, the conclusion should be that this request was made by a knowledgeable Alexander either, in the case of acquiescence, to gain lordship over Tyre, or in the case of denial, to illicit a pretext for a declaration of war.³⁶⁰ This is supported by the clarity of the oracle quoted above from the *Armenian* narrative that warns against allowing a (foreign) king to enter the city, as it will result in the city falling under his power. This differs from the focus in the extant Greek recensions of *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, which focus on the resultant destruction of the city should Alexander be allowed to enter.³⁶¹ These nuances do not actually represent much of a difference at all, but instead focus on different aspects of the siege in hindsight.

³⁵⁹ Wolohojian 1969:57; cf. *A-text, beta, gamma*, i.35.5; Stoneman 2007:80-83; 194-197; 328-329.

³⁶⁰ Lane Fox 2004:181; Heckel 2008:66; both note that Alexander's father, Philip, was presented using a similar tactic to instigate an unavoidable war against Atheas (Justin ix.2.10-13).

³⁶¹ E.g. *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, i.35.2 (*A-text; beta; gamma*; Stoneman 2007:80-81; 194-195; 326-327).

One on the sack of Tyre as the city is taken, the other on Alexander's subsequent hegemony over the city.³⁶² Therefore, what can be understood to be at stake is the maintenance of Tyrian independence. Across the tradition, Alexander is barred from entering the city of Tyre to ensure a degree of autonomy for the Phoenician state.³⁶³ This is an understanding that reconciles well with the city's history up to that point during the First Millennium BCE.³⁶⁴

It is plausible to understand this as a calculated action by Alexander, which achieved that which the previous great Mesopotamian kings of the First Millennium BCE had failed to do, take the island city and fully subjugate Tyre. The sanctuary was secondary representing only a device to gain said access and to emphasise his elevation to the position of king of Tyre when he is finally able to enter the sanctuary.³⁶⁵ Just as in the Gilgamesh tradition, upon conquering the king on the Cedar Mountain, the supplanting of the antagonists' position is exemplified through our protagonists' unrestricted access to the house of the gods upon the mountain. Therefore, by utilising the combined narrative tradition for the episode within the Alexander tradition, it is possible to identify a common understanding for what motivated the conflict on both sides, namely the elevation of Alexander to a

³⁶² This double-aspect is common across the tradition: *sack of Tyre* (*Armenian*, 102; Wolohojian 1969:58; *Syriac*, i.35; Budge 1889:44-45; *A-text, beta, gamma*, i.35.9; Stoneman 2007:82-83; 196-197; 330-331; Diod. xvii.46.4; Arrian, *Anab.* ii.24.2-5; QCR iv.4.12-18); *Alexander's subsequent hegemony* (*Armenian*, 102; Wolohojian 1969:58; *Syriac*, i.35; Budge 1889:44-45; *A-text, beta, gamma*, i.36.1; Stoneman 2007:82-83; 196-197; 330-331; Diod. xvi.46.6; Plut. *Alex.* 25.2; Arrian, *Anab.* ii.24.6; QCR iv.5.9).

³⁶³ Diodorus (xvii.40.3) is the only one to potentially mention motives beyond self-interest, but even then the aid for the Persian cause is presented in the hope of receiving gifts and gratitude from the king, Darius III.

³⁶⁴ This history is dealt with in detail for the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods by Katzenstein (1973:77-347). Tyre's island-based autonomy appears to have maintained during the Persian period (Katzenstein 1979; Jigoulov 2010), thus arriving at the coming of Alexander. For example, consider representations of interactions between Tyre and these Mesopotamian kings: Shalmaneser III (Fig.1.4); Esarhaddon (*treaty with Baal of Tyre*; Luckenbill 1927:229-231); and Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel 26-29). All result in the reduction of Tyre to tributee or vassal status, but none achieve the conquest of the island city.

³⁶⁵ Arrian, *Anab.* ii.24.6; iii.6.1; Diod. xvii.46.6; QCR iv.8.16; cf. Arrian (*Anab.* ii.23.6), where it is claimed that upon taking the wall, Alexander descended into the city through the royal quarters. Symbolically, this detail may have been inserted to emphasise Alexander's new-found Tyrian sovereignty.

position of sovereignty over Tyre.³⁶⁶ This might seem to be quite an obvious point, but it is actually more significant that it first appears. Alexander achieved here what no Mesopotamian king before him had, the taking of the island city of Tyre, which had a longstanding association with the Cedar Mountain in royal campaign narrative.

Thus the ancient quality of the oracle quoted above from the *Armenian* and *Syriac* narratives may actually be considered as reflective of the history of the island city of Tyre since Hiram supposedly connected the two smaller islands (approximately during the tenth century BCE) and created the larger familiar island city.³⁶⁷ The constant threat to Tyrian autonomy due to the enmity of powerful neighbours, such as the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires, may have created an ideal of Tyrian independence centred upon the sacrosanct, inviolability of their island city. Conceptually, an undefeatable enemy at the Upper Sea on the Cedar Mountain is perceivable, as time and time again Tyre held out against full conquest. Thus the oracles in the *Armenian* and *Syriac* express this ideal of the island-based independence via an ancient prophecy warning against allowing a (foreign) king to enter the city and conceptually tread on the Mountain. The result would be the full

³⁶⁶ This method bears further fruit in the analysis of the narrative accounts of the episode. Justin's (xi.10.14) assertion that Tyre was eventually taken by treachery has also caused confusion. It led Romane (1987:79) to conclude that Justin is simply wrong here, and Radet (1925:53) to assign the treachery to Apollo's desertion. Radet's assessment seems to directly contradict the rest of his assessment concerning Apollo during the conflict and is an odd way to describe the actions of a god. Again, by consulting Pseudo-Callisthenes it is possible to identify a better explanation for Justin's statement. In these narratives, the city is taken at night with the assistance of locals, who open the gates and slaughter the guards (*Armenian*, 102; Wolohojian 1969:58; *A-text, beta, gamma*, i.35.9; Stoneman 2007:82-83; 196-197; 330-331). This is a more reconcilable conclusion to Justin's end of the siege, and therefore plausibly indicative of a common understanding within the narratives.

³⁶⁷ Josephus, *Ant.* viii.147; *C. Apion*, i.113; Jidejian 1969:27; Katzenstein 1973:87-94; Bikai & Bikai 1987:74-78. The archaeology is yet to help disprove or substantiate Josephus. Of course, the ideology may even pre-date this, as even in Josephus there is an island city and temples that pre-dated Hiram's works. See also, Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, xl.423-534, for another description of the creation of the island city of Tyre. Nonnus' account has Herakles narrate the city's creation to Dionysus. The god, Herakles, takes an active role in the island city's settlement by taking human form and inspiring the local inhabitants to colonise the islands and make them one unassailable city. These rocks have a divine, wandering aspect to them in this narrative and are referred to as the Ambrosial Rocks before they are anchored by the Tyrians further exemplifying the divine abode conceptualisation. Although, this narrative is apparently set in a distant heroic age, Herakles' taking of human form to drive the creation of the island city means that it is not irreconcilable with the actions of a Melqart-associated Hiram. Both Josephus and Nonnus are late, post Alexander sources, but both narratives may be considered to engage with a (semi-)mythical and ideological founder narrative tradition.

subjugation of Tyre (*Armenian*), and the loss of its island autonomy as it is 'taken away from its deep place' (*Syriac*) and converted to part of the new king's mainland territory. That this oracle is provided by the sun god just continues the motif that the Cedar Mountains are the sun god's affair.

A detail that may further support the theory that this campaign was conceptualised thus, are the duties subscribed to the satrap of Phoenicia by Alexander after his conquest of the city,

'He made the satrap of the Phoenicians the caretaker and guardian of Tyre, and having traversed the land of Tyre, he left.'
(*Armenian*, 102)³⁶⁸

This idiosyncratic expression of the satrap's duties as that of a 'caretaker' and 'guardian' directly echoes the role of Humbaba in the Cedar Forest and on the Cedar Mountain.³⁶⁹ Now that a transfer of hegemony has occurred on the Cedar Mountain, it is left to Alexander to appoint a new guardian to care for the Forest in his stead. Despite the uniqueness of Alexander's situation (i.e. having actually conquered the island city), it is not impossible that this motif of appointing a new guardian also had antecedents in the Mesopotamian royal narratives of campaigning. Even though the island city was not previously taken, Tyre was defeated and forced to accept terms akin to vassal status. Esarhaddon's treaty with the king of Tyre mentions the placement of an Assyrian official alongside the Tyrian king.³⁷⁰ Whilst after Nebuchadnezzar's siege it has been argued that the Tyrian king, Ethbaal III was forced to surrender himself, even if not the island, and that the

³⁶⁸ Wolohojian 1969:58; cf. *Syriac*, i.35: 'And Alexander appointed the satrap of Phoenicia to take charge of and guard the country' (Budge 1889:45). In the Greek it is not as overtly stated that the satrap is a guardian, but this understanding is not precluded (*A-text, beta, gamma*, i.36.1; Stoneman 2007:82-83; 196-197; 330-331).

³⁶⁹ It also echoes the role of the king of Tyre ('on god's mountain' and 'anointed cherub') in Ezekiel 28.14.

³⁷⁰ In the treaty between Esarhaddon and the king of Tyre, Baal I, it is detailed that the Neo-Assyrian king appointed a *qêpu* 'royal deputy' over the Tyrian king. Katzenstein has argued that this royal deputy resided on the mainland in Ushu (Old Tyre) and that the territorial concessions made to Baal indicate a degree of concord and compromise between Esarhaddon and his vassal, maintaining Tyre's regional supremacy over its neighbours (Luckenbill 1927:229-231; Katzenstein 1973:267-276; Reiner 2011:212-213; *ANET*³ 533-534).

Babylonian king replaced him with Baal II.³⁷¹ In addition to this, the Neo-Babylonians appointed a *šandabbaku* 'governor' for Tyre, thus mirroring the Tyrian king and imperial governor co-rule enacted by the Neo-Assyrians, and as we will see continued by Alexander.³⁷²

Therefore, it is possible that these previous appointments by Mesopotamian monarchs were likewise contextualised as the appointing of a new guardian on the Cedar Mountain. If so, the appointing of a new guardian can be understood through the action of appointing the king in Tyre and/or an official to oversee him. Perhaps both are present in each contextualisation of this sort of campaign. The favourite of the sun god is inspired to campaign to the Cedar Mountain to remove the deprecated guardian, just as Gilgamesh had been. Upon achieving his victory, instead of slaying the guardian our protagonist kings accept the pleadings for mercy of their own Humbabas and allow him to stay on the Mountain as a vassal.³⁷³ This princely mercy comes with the consequence of an official left in place to assure that the king of Tyre stays loyal and obedient. This doubling is also present in the Alexander narratives. As we have seen, Alexander appoints a satrap of Phoenicia as guardian over Tyre, but he also shows mercy in the narrative tradition towards the incumbent guardian, the Tyrian king, Azemilcus.³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Josephus, *C. Apion* i.156-159; Katzenstein 1973:319-347. Even if Katzenstein is incorrect about Ethbaal's exile to Babylon, it does appear that the Neo-Babylonians exerted a degree of control upon the Tyrian royal family after the siege. See Unger (1931:35) and Oppenheim (2011:274-275; *ANET* 308) for a fragmentary administrative tablet from Nebuchadnezzar II's court (c.570 BCE), which appears to support Josephus' presentation of the non-ruling Tyrian royals residing as hostages in Babylon after the siege. Unger (1926:316) provides us with a Neo-Babylonian tablet detailing provisions for the king and soldiers who went against Tyre, further confirming a campaign against the city actually occurred.

³⁷² Unger 1926:315-316.

³⁷³ Note that in *GH A*, 159-179 and *GH B*, 135ff Gilgamesh instinctively wants to spare Huwawa, but Enkidu insists on the guardian's execution (Edzard 1991:222-228; Edzard 1993:31-34; George 1999:159-160; 165-166; Fleming & Milstein 2010:189; 200). It is possible that Huwawa was spared in *GH B*, but the end of this poem is too fragmentary to know with any certainty (cf. Edzard 1993:51-52; 56-57; Ganter 1995; George 2003:11; 111-112; Graff 2012:74-75).

³⁷⁴ For Alexander showing mercy to the Tyrian king, Azemilcus ('Ozmilk'), who had sought sanctuary in the temple of Melqart, see Arrian, *Anab.* ii.24.5; *contra* Curtius (iv.4.13-18) who states that no armed man committed himself to the gods and that only the Carthaginian envoys were spared. Diodorus (xvii.46.6-47) misplaces the story of Abdalonymous of Sidon here. Even though this is obviously an error, it presents the king being replaced by one of Alexander's (through the agency of Hephaestion) choosing. This presents us with all three fates for the Tyrian king in the narrative tradition: slain; spared and restored; and spared, but replaced. See Lemaire (1991; 2006:422-425;

4.2.4 Alexander and the Tyrian Herakles

Alexander's contest with the Tyrian king, Azemilcus, or lack of one, is intriguing. Although perfectly positioned to be conceptualised as Alexander's narrative antagonist in the campaign, Azemilcus is largely absent until it is time for Alexander to spare him.³⁷⁵ This is potentially due to Alexander's decision to allow Azemilcus to remain in position after the siege, making traditions which have them initially as enemies politically inconvenient. However, no such delicacy was employed in the narrative tradition concerning Porus and the Indian campaign.³⁷⁶ This leads us to conclude that either, any narrative contest within the tradition between our protagonist Alexander and an antagonistic Azemilcus has been lost, or that Azemilcus was never thus elevated. An alternative antagonist could be the city's patron god, Melqart. Ideologically identified with the king, it is possible that the god took on the role of guardian on the mountain elevating Alexander's contest beyond the mortal sphere to a sort of mythological battle. However, a contest with Melqart is likewise absent.

The only possible exception currently extant is Curtius' claim that the statue of the deserting Apollo was bound to the altar of the Tyrian Herakles in the hope that this god would hold the sun god fast in Tyre. This passage from Curtius follows directly on from the conversion of the causeway into a forest tract, and continues,

Kuhrt 2007:441) for identification of relative economical stability in Tyre before and after Alexander's conquest based largely on numismatic evidence. Lemaire dates the Tyrian king, Azemilcus' reign from 347/6 to 309/8 BCE indicating that Arrian's outcome for the Tyrian king was the accurate one. Elayi & Elayi (2009:371-389) have brought Lemaire's calculations into question and argued that Azemilcus' reign began in 349 BCE and continued approximately down to 321 or 315 BCE. Even if their corrections are followed, the evidence still supports the understanding that the Tyrian king continued to reign for a considerable period after Alexander's conquest of the city. Further potentially significant details from the Alexander narratives regarding the governance of Phoenicia that are worth noting are: Curtius (iv.5.9) tells us that Philotas is made governor for the region around Tyre. Perhaps he had a similar function to Esarhaddon's official; Arrian (*Anab.* iii.6.4) states that Coeranus, a Beroean, was appointed as tax collector in Phoenicia.

³⁷⁵ Arrian (*Anab.* ii.15.7) positions Azemilcus as sailing with the Persian fleet when Alexander meets with the Tyrian envoys in advance of the siege.

³⁷⁶ For example, see Arrian (*Anab.* v.8.4-19.3) for an initially hostile and belligerent Porus, who is kept in post after being defeated and even sees his territory expanded.

quamquam auctor levis erat, tamen ad deteriora credenda proni metu aurea catena devinxere simulacrum araeque Herculis, cuius numini urbem dicaverant, inseruere vinculum quasi illo deo Apollinem retenturo.

‘Although the author of the tale was a man of slight importance, yet, inclined through fear to believe the worst, they bound the statue of Apollo with a chain of gold to its base, and attached the chain to the altar of Hercules, to whose divine power they had dedicated their city, supposing that that god would hold Apollo back.’
(QCR iv.3.22)³⁷⁷

It is possible, even plausible that this action speaks to a notion of strength attached to a Herakles-figure that would enable the god to hold back the sun god, but this is not necessarily what is being rendered. Melqart, as the city’s chief deity, may be considered superior to the sun god and therefore able to arrest his desertion. It is even possible that an association in the city between Melqart and the sun god is being relied upon to deter Apollo’s switch to Alexander. What can be confidently stated is that this does potentially present us with a contest between Alexander and the Tyrian Herakles for the sun god.

However, this is an action carried out by the citizens, not by the deity. There is no claim that the Tyrian Herakles attempted to exert any such restraint upon Apollo. Although expected to support the Tyrian cause as the patron deity of the city, the Tyrian Herakles was actually presented in three of the extant narratives welcoming Alexander into Tyre and aiding his taking of the city,

At ille haudquaquam rudis pertractandi militares animos speciem sibi Herculis in somno oblatam esse pronuntiat dextram porrigentis: illo duce, illo aperiente in urbem intrare se visum.

‘But Alexander, who was by no means inexperienced in working upon the minds of soldiers, announced that an apparition of Hercules had appeared to him in his sleep, offering him his right hand; with that god leading him and opening the way he dreamed that he entered the city.’
(QCR iv.2.17)³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ Cf. Diodorus (xvii.41.8) and Plutarch (*Alex.* 24.4), where we are told, that the statue of Apollo was simply bound to its base.

³⁷⁸ Rutz (1965:374) highlights the propagandistic presentation of this dream in Curtius’ narrative; cf. Plutarch (*Alex.* 24.3) and Arrian (*Anab.* ii.18.1), who also give accounts of this dream minus the cynical overtones.

Instead of in conflict, it is in alliance that the Tyrian Herakles and Alexander assault the Cedar Mountain. The relationship between Alexander and the Tyrian Herakles is a positive one, that of a companion in the campaign. The god is presented reaching out his hand from the wall and helping Alexander scale the city. The question of why the city god of Tyre would aid a foreign invader then presents itself. It is possible that he has become displeased with the Tyrians, like the sun god, and is bringing about vengeance and change, yet this is not stated in any of the sources.

It may have been due to a perceived familial connection between the god and the king. Alexander as a descendant of Herakles may be welcomed into his city by his ancestor regardless of the will and fate of its current occupants. Although the Tyrian Herakles was not strictly speaking the Herakles from which the Macedonian royal line descended.³⁷⁹ What is clear from the ancient discussions is that any Herakles-figure was understood in conjunction or association with other Herakles-figures. The reality that the mention of one at times resulted in the clarification of the other/s supports this understanding. Despite their individual peculiarities, the common identification through the name Herakles alone indicates that any differentiation was far from absolute. This melding is of course present in the Alexander narratives, as Curtius identifies the Tyrian Herakles as one and the same with the Macedonian royal ancestor.³⁸⁰

When addressing this Melqart-Herakles association, Bloedow proposed that the Tyrians would have been resistant to the connection made between the Greek Heracleian 'upstart' and their ancient Phoenician god, Melqart.³⁸¹ It is hard to understand why Bloedow would have come to this conclusion and it seems as if this arbitrary assertion was borne out of a far too canonical reception of the differentiations in the ancient discussions. One detail from these discussions that

³⁷⁹ See Herodotus (ii.43-44), Cicero (*De Natura Deorum*, iii.16), and Arrian (*Anab.* ii.16.1-6) for ancient discussions on the different Herakles', and for the differentiation between the Tyrian Herakles and the Macedonian royal ancestor. Also, see Lucian (*De Syria dea*, 3) who likewise differentiates between the Tyrian and Greek Herakles. This has led Bonnet (1992:177) and Mettinger (2001:84) to state that the Greek sources never confuse the two deities.

³⁸⁰ QCR iv.2.2-3.

³⁸¹ Bloedow 1998:272; *contra* Nitschke 2013.

seems to have led Bloedow down this path, appears to have been Herodotus' dating for the original temple,

καὶ θέλων δὲ τούτων πέρι σαφές τι εἰδέναι ἐξ ὧν οἶόν τε ἦν, ἔπλευσα καὶ ἐς Τύρον τῆς Φοινίκης, πυρηνόμενος αὐτόθι εἶναι ἱρὸν Ἡρακλέος ἁγίον. καὶ εἶδον πλουσίως κατεσκευασμένον ἄλλοις τε πολλοῖσι ἀναθήμασι, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἦσαν στῆλαι δύο, ἡ μὲν χρυσοῦ ἀπέφθου, ἡ δὲ σμαράγδου λίθου λάμποντος τὰς νύκτας μέγαθος. ἐς λόγους δὲ ἐλθὼν τοῖσι ἱρεῦσι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰρόμην ὁκόσος χρόνος εἴη ἐξ οὗ σφι τὸ ἱρὸν ἱδρυται. εὗρον δὲ οὐδὲ τούτους τοῖσι Ἑλλήσι συμφερομένους: ἔφασαν γὰρ ἅμα Τύρῳ οἰκίζομένη καὶ τὸ ἱρὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἱδρυθῆναι, εἶναι δὲ ἔτεα ἀπ' οὗ Τύρον οἰκέουσι τριηκόσια καὶ δισχίλια.

'Moreover, wishing to get clear information about this matter where it was possible so to do, I took ship for Tyre in Phoenicia, where I had learned by inquiry that there was a holy temple of Herakles. There I saw it, richly equipped with many other offerings, besides two pillars, one of refined gold, one of emerald: a great pillar that shone at night; and in conversation with the priests, I asked how long it was since their temple was built. I found that their account did not tally with the belief of the Greeks, either; for they said that the temple of the god was founded when Tyre first became a city, and that was two thousand three hundred years ago.'

(HDT ii.44)

If we loosely date Herodotus to the second-half of the fifth century BCE and assume that the figure Herodotus translates is only an approximation due to its distance back into the past, then we are presented with a date of somewhere in the twenty-eighth, maybe twenty-seventh, century BCE. Certain difficulties arise here. Not even the most daring scholar would propose Phoenician settlement on Tyre in the first half of the Third Millennium BCE. Further, the information concerning the joining of the two islands of Tyre by Hiram I in approximately the tenth century BCE, and his possible raising of the first temple to Melqart at this time, potentially creates a chasm of over a millennium and a half between the two traditions.³⁸² That there is no extant evidence for Melqart prior to the First Millennium BCE appears to put Herodotus' claim into further doubt.³⁸³

As previously stated, the excavations of Tyre are yet to prove or disprove the claims of Hiram's innovations on the island, whilst the survival of no evidence doesn't necessarily mean that the god did not originate from a much earlier

³⁸² Josephus, *Ant.* viii.5.3; *Apion* i.18; cf. Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, xl.423-534, which potentially presents a more distant foundation story for the island city.

³⁸³ Katzenstein 1973:91; Nitschke 2013:258-261.

period.³⁸⁴ Yet, one partial excavation on the island does provide us with potentially critical evidence regarding this passage. A small trench was dug on the island to distinguish whether there was Early Bronze Age settlement. The trench confirmed this, but it is the intervening layers that may prove the most relevant to the detail in Herodotus. The trench showed evidence of Early Bronze Age settlement on the island and then a gap of non-settlement until the Late Bronze Age.³⁸⁵ If this is, in fact, indicative of the island-wide situation as Bikai and Bikai suggest, then we are presented with a mammoth break between the early settlement and resettlement of the island of Tyre. It is very unlikely that we would be talking about the same or continuous cultures. What is currently evident appears to be settlement, abandonment, and much later re-settlement by others.³⁸⁶ As such it is not clear how one could reconcile the claimed ancestry in Herodotus with the Early Bronze settlement on the island.

Therefore, one is left to question from where the dating for the foundation of the city and the temple came. I would argue that the best case for understanding this detail is through association, assimilation, and syncretism. Just as a supposedly 'younger' Greek Herakles is associated with a supposedly 'older' Melqart, perhaps Melqart acquired an association with an earlier figure or deity. It is interesting that the dating in Herodotus places us approximately in the proposed time of a 'historical' Gilgamesh.³⁸⁷ We may consider that the Gilgamesh tradition and its protagonist's activities in the region, on the Cedar Mountain, have impacted on the antiquity of Tyre and Melqart. This is in no way meant to claim that one equals the other in its entirety, but that comparable figures may have acquired aspects of each others' tradition. Tyre's location at the Upper Sea and association with the Cedar Mountain would have linked it to Gilgamesh in narrative. The comparable Melqart

³⁸⁴ Katzenstein (1973:91-93) argues that Melqart must have surely pre-dated Hiram and the 10th century BCE, albeit instinctively rather than evidentially. Note that even Katzenstein only argues for a Late Bronze Age date in line with the re-founding of the city, c.1200 BCE.

³⁸⁵ Bikai & Bikai 1987:74-78; Fig.9.

³⁸⁶ Bikai & Bikai (1987:77) have suggested the possibility that the Early Bronze Age island settlement was an elite Egyptian outpost for timber control and collection. This is suggested due to the limited size and sustainability of the Early Bronze Age island settlement, and that the only important artefact discovered in the Early Bronze Age levels thus far is of Egyptian origin.

³⁸⁷ Jacobsen 1976:209; George 2003:71-90; 101-119.

may then have acquired aspects of Gilgamesh, even his antiquity, just as Melqart and Herakles coalesced in the ancient world.³⁸⁸ As Alexander campaigned eastwards, his ancestral association with Herakles would have become infinitely deployable in relation to other comparable figures, such as Melqart and Gilgamesh. In fact, it is possible that Alexander's interest in, and association with, the Argead ancestor was only intensified after events at Tyre due to this cross-cultural, conqueror-character application.³⁸⁹

4.2.5 The elevation of Alexander's kingship to supreme hegemony

Therefore, we are still missing our narrative antagonist. As alluded to above, it is possible that antagonistic traditions centring upon Azemilcus or Melqart are now lost. It is also possible that the island/mountain city itself occupied the narrative role of antagonist, yet one further possibility has not been considered in our discussion thus far. This is an absent antagonist, namely Darius III. As with his Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian antecedents, and subsequently with Alexander, it is plausible that the Achaemenid king, Darius, was considered the hegemonic king on the mountain with the Tyrian king simply functioning as a vassal left in place. It is interesting that in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, a belligerent Darius reasserts his claim to be the sun god's chosen one in a letter sent to Alexander upon the latter's conquest of Tyre,

"I, king of kings, kinsman of the gods, who share the throne of the sun god, Mihr, and rise with the sun, Darius, myself a god, give my servant Alexander these orders."
(*Armenian*, 103)³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ See Brundage (1958) for further arguments for the Gilgamesh, Melqart, Herakles equation.

³⁸⁹ Nicgorski 2005:105; Kleiner 1949:11-17; Seltman 1955:205; Pollitt 1986:26.

³⁹⁰ Wolohojian 1969:58; cf. "'From the king of kings and the kinsman of the gods, who is enthroned with the god Mithras, the son of the stars, Darius the Persian, to Alexander my servant, greeting'" (*Syriac*, i.36; Budge 1889:46). *Beta* and *gamma* do not specifically name Mithras, simply stating that Darius rises like the sun, but A-text and Julius Valerius' translation (the earliest securely dated *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narrative) do name Mithras in Darius' titled address just as seen in the *Armenian* and *Syriac* (*Pseudo-Callisthenes*, i.36.2; Stoneman 2007:82-83; 198-199; 332-333; 432-433). Therefore, it seems plausible that the absence of Mithras' name in the other narratives represents a dilution of the original motif. For a discussion of the letters between Alexander and Darius in the Greek *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives and their engagement with addressing the presentations of power by the two monarchs, see Whitmarsh (2013:86-100). The narrative use of letters is much more pronounced in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives and the Alexander Romance more generally.

This emphasis of the association between the Achaemenid king and the sun god, Mithras, may be conspicuous in narrative terms.³⁹¹ Just as Alexander has taken the Cedar Mountain and claimed the patronage of the sun god, we are presented with Darius asserting the opposite.³⁹² The Persian king is stating that it is he who still occupies the position of divine favour and support. Further, he is asserting Alexander's continued vassal or inferior status, denying any possible changing of the guard. The placement of this sun god titular in the narrative directly after Alexander's conquest of Tyre is surely significant and seems to support our conceptualisation of the episode. It is possible to view this as narrative jousting as the Achaemenid king is presented attempting to marginalise the conceptualisation of the conquest of Tyre and its empire-wide significance.³⁹³

This claim of retention of the sun god's patronage by Darius potentially presents us with an indication that the conquest of Tyre could plausibly have been presented to symbolise Alexander's outright victory in the war. Comparable to the function of the episode in the Gilgamesh tradition, this would mean that the siege of Tyre elevated Alexander beyond local legitimacy and indicated a switch in divine support that would see the Macedonian king become the hegemonic ruler in place of the

This led Merkelbach (1977:230-252) to propose an epistolary novel within the Alexander tradition from which many of these Romance letters derive. Also see Rosenmeyer's (2001:169-192) discussion of the use of letters in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, and (2001) more generally for the use of letters in Greek literature.

³⁹¹ Generally speaking, there is nothing at all conspicuous about the association between the Achaemenid king and the Persian sun god, Mithras, in this period. Since the reign of Artaxerxes II, Mithras had been part of a trinity of gods mentioned in Achaemenid royal inscriptions, alongside Ahuramazda and Anahita (see Briant 2002:250-253 and Kuhrt 2007, specifically chapters 9 & 11). This does not necessarily mean that Mithras was an innovation of the fourth century, but that he became more prominent in royal self-presentation. Although normally part of a trinity in Achaemenid inscriptions, Mithra was invoked in isolation on a column base from Artaxerxes II's palace at Ecbatana (A²Hb; Kuhrt 2007:497-499), therefore making it possible that he may have been rendered in isolation by Darius III. That Mithras became associated with the campaigning king in late Achaemenid period, somewhat usurping aspects of Ahuramazda's functionality seems plausible (Briant 2002:251-252).

³⁹² Note that in Nonnus (*Dionysiaca*, xl.400-401), Mithras has fully usurped Shamash and is identified as the Babylonian sun god.

³⁹³ Cf. QCR iv.13.12-13, where Darius invokes Mithras before the decisive Battle of Gaugamela. The outcome is envisioned to demonstrate the patronage of the sun god and supremacy for the victor, granted Darius still expects this to be him at this point in the narrative.

Achaemenid monarch. A dream of Alexander's during the siege in the *Syriac* may support this understanding,

'And when he (Alexander) fell asleep, he saw in his dream the ranks of the singers (or satyrs), who were standing before Dionysos and singing and dancing, and they had garlands of young vine branches with their clusters on their heads; and Dionysos was standing and holding a Tyrian daric in his hand, and he gave it to Alexander; and a cluster of grapes from the garland on the head of Dionysos fell to the ground, and Alexander trod upon it and squeezed out the wine from it. When Alexander awoke, he gave orders to call those skilled in dreams; and when they came and heard the dream from him, they answered and said to him, "O king, it is granted to thee to take the land of Tyre; for the daric which Dionysos gave thee represents the country which is going to be delivered over to thee; and those grapes which thou sawest fall from the garland of Dionysos are the people of the city who are to fall and be crushed beneath the feet of thy hosts; and the wine which thou didst see is the blood of the slain which will be shed.'"

(*Syriac*, i.35)³⁹⁴

This dream seems to parallel another dream of Alexander's during the siege extant in other *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives.³⁹⁵ The function of the grapes in the dream from the *Syriac* and the cheese from the dream in the other *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, appear to be largely comparable, symbolically signalling the brutal conquest of the city. The three variations of the motif extant within the Alexander tradition (i.e. cheese in the *Greek Pseudo-Callisthenes*, grapes in the *Syriac*, and related, but more loosely, the play on words with σάτυρος in Plutarch) indicate that this was a reasonably fluid narrative device, albeit stable in function and retaining certain details such as the satyr.

However, the 'daric' motif currently extant only in the *Syriac* is conspicuous. Firstly, it appears to be a slightly confused detail. The accuracy of the coinage denomination contemporary with the Achaemenid period and empire appears to

³⁹⁴ Budge 1889:44-45.

³⁹⁵ This dream depicts a satyr of Dionysus presenting of a piece of cheese to Alexander, which the king promptly squashes under foot. This represents a play on the Greek words *Týpos* 'Tyre' and *τυρός* 'cheese' (*A-text, beta, gamma*, i.35.7; Stoneman 2007:82-83; 196-197; 328-329; *Armenian*, 101; Wolohojian 1969:58; 170; it should be noted that in beta and gamma the Greek renders the god as Διός, and so conventionally we should translated the deity as 'Zeus' here; cf. σάτυρος αὐτῷ φανείς ἐδόκει προσπαίζειν πόρρωθεν, εἴτα βουλομένου λαβεῖν ὑπεξέφευγε: τέλος δὲ πολλὰ λιπαρήσαντος καὶ περιδραμόντος ἦλθεν εἰς χεῖρας. οἱ δὲ μάντιες τοῦνομα διαιροῦντες οὐκ ἀπιθάνως ἔφασαν αὐτῷ: 'σὴ γενήσεται Týρος.' 'In another dream, too, Alexander thought he saw a satyr who mocked him at a distance, and eluded his grasp when he tried to catch him, but finally, after much coaxing and chasing, surrendered. The seers, dividing the word 'satyros' into two parts, said to him, plausibly enough, 'Tyre is to be thine' (Plut. *Alex.* 24.5).

be contradicted by the apparent inaccuracy of its designation as a 'Tyrian daric'.³⁹⁶ It is true that the Phoenician states began minting coins during the Persian period, and that resultantly there was a mint at Tyre.³⁹⁷ With this considered, it is possible to understand this motif as fairly contemporary to the events of the siege. However, there is currently no evidence that darics were ever minted at Tyre. In fact, there is precious little evidence for darics even being circulated in Phoenicia during the Achaemenid period.³⁹⁸ Further, the current numismatic evidence from Achaemenid Phoenicia indicates that the Phoenicians never used gold to make coinage during the Persian period.³⁹⁹ Therefore, this currently precludes any idea that a Tyrian gold coin circulating during this period may have occasionally been comparatively referred to as a 'Tyrian daric'.⁴⁰⁰

However, gold coins were minted in Phoenicia after Alexander's conquest of the region. Alexander's gold staters present us with the possibility that gold coins were being minted at Tyre at the beginning of the Hellenistic period.⁴⁰¹ Yet, it is not clear why these would have ever been referred to as 'Tyrian darics'. It would appear from the discussion thus far that 'darics of Alexander' could have been possible, but this seems unlikely and would represent an otherwise unattested designation for Alexander's gold coinage. It is of course possible that the author of the motif knew

³⁹⁶ For darics, see Carradice 1987a; Briant 2002:408-409; 934-935.

³⁹⁷ Elayi & Elayi 2009:323-389; Jigoulov 2010:71-112.

³⁹⁸ Jigoulov 2010:97-102. Briant (2002:409) claims that darics were exclusively minted at Sardis. Although, he does not rule out the possibility that the minting of darics spread further later in the empire. Price (1993:172) and Carradice (1987:85) also argue for the primacy of Sardis concerning the minting of darics, but highlight that a further mint in Western Asia Minor probably minted the royal coinage too during the Achaemenid period. Therefore, it currently appears that the minting of darics was restricted to what was previously territory within the Lydian Empire. Elayi & Elayi (1993:87-90) and Jigoulov (2010:101-102) highlight that as yet only one Persian coin has been discovered in Phoenicia, and that was a silver coin (so not a daric) found at Byblos.

³⁹⁹ Elayi & Elayi 2009:281-284; Jigoulov 2010:74.

⁴⁰⁰ See Carradice 1987a:75-76 and Melville-Jones 1979 for the presentation that the term 'daric' may have at times been generically and comparatively employed to mean 'a gold coin'. Significantly, Melville-Jones (1979:33-34) argues that Philip II's Attic-weight gold staters were alternatively referred to as *δαρ]εικοὺς Φιλίππειους* 'darics of Philip' (IG II² 1526, lines 22-23). I do not agree with Carradice (1987a:75) that the term 'daric' may have also been used to refer to silver Persian coins. Plutarch (*Cimon* 10.8) can be understood to distinguish between the silver in one bowl and the gold darics in the other bowl.

⁴⁰¹ See Le Rider (2007:134-139) for Alexander's gold staters being minted in Tyre and the surrounding areas shortly after his conquest of the region.

of Tyre's mint and knew of darics, and simply made a mistake here.⁴⁰² If so, we are presented with two symbolic motifs (the daric and the grapes) within the same dream representing Alexander's taking of the city.

Alternatively, I would like to consider that the error in understanding exists in the complementary detail to the 'daric' motif and the interpretation of its symbolic significance. This is by understanding the qualification of the 'daric' as 'Tyrian' and its interpretation that it represented solely the taking of the city of Tyre to be in error. Of course, this is only a possible theory based on some *a priori* considerations, but it is worth considering in light of our current discussion. *Contra* to the detail of the 'daric' there is no reason to consider the 'Tyrian' qualification or the limited interpretation of the motif's symbolic relevance to have any special antiquity. In fact, both could have been borne out of attempts to make the 'daric' motif more understandable once it had become blind within the tradition. Instead we can consider that this motif engages with a conceptualisation that the conquest of Tyre (the Cedar Mountain) signified the transfer of divine support and was representative of the divine will for the protagonist's hegemony over the entire empire. Consider the more reconcilable symbolic significance of the daric representing a political and ideological tool for the propagation of the image and iconography of Achaemenid kingship itself.⁴⁰³

This attribution of a centralised association to the daric motif may be supported further by the minting of darics in Babylon after Alexander's conquest.⁴⁰⁴ That the

⁴⁰² The mint at Tyre outlasted the Persian Empire. See Lemaire (1976) and Le Rider (2007:126-139) for the assigning of coinage otherwise attributed to a mint at Ake to the mint at Tyre (*contra* Newell 1916; Price 1979; 1991:405-407). This debate presents us with the Tyrian mint possibly, even plausibly, continuing to operate under Alexander. It is less controversial that the mint at Tyre operated briefly from the end of the fourth century BCE into the beginning of the third century BCE under the Antigonids (Hersh 1998; Wheatley 2003). Therefore, knowledge of the mint by any author of the motif would still have been reasonably contemporary. For examples of darics in Greek narratives, see Thucydides viii.28.4; Xenophon, *Anab.* i.3.21; Plut. *Artaxerxes* 5.1 (Kuhrt 2007:338-339; 361; 530).

⁴⁰³ Stronach 1989; Briant 2002:409.

⁴⁰⁴ For the minting of darics and double-darics in Babylon during and/or shortly after Alexander's reign, see Nicolet-Pierre (1999:296-305) and Le Rider (2007:210-214). However, double-darics and darics were not restricted to Babylon during this period, but were minted and utilised further East (Nicolet-Pierre 1999; Le Rider 2007:243-246). For the presentation in narrative of their usage by

Babylon mint starts producing darics after Alexander's invasion is conspicuous. The inauguration of minting darics in Mesopotamia, whilst it was discontinued in the West plausibly aligns with my interpretation of the daric motif in the *Syriac*. It seems that we are being presented with numismatic evidence of a Macedonian association between the daric and kingship in Mesopotamia. Although, the Macedonian minting and utilisation of darics was not limited to Babylon and Mesopotamia, it does appear to have been limited to the East of the empire. This centralises the symbolic usage of the daric to the regions where the Achaemenid central administration and royal capitals were located. Therefore, it is possible to understand the daric motif in the *Syriac*, as representative of Alexander having supreme kingship bestowed upon him by the god, and being gifted his future empire.

Thus it appears that it is not simply the elevation to lord of Tyre that can be detected in the narratives. Just as I have argued above for the Gilgamesh tradition, Alexander's siege of Tyre can be argued to elevate our protagonist to a position of supreme and hegemonic royal power beyond the confines of a simple city. Suddenly the episodes in our relevant traditions appear to function comparably, not just representing local conquest, but becoming ideologically representative of supreme legitimacy as the divinely sanctioned hegemonic king. This understanding is not only detectable in the Alexander narratives through the abstract interpretation of motifs such as that rendered above, but it is more overtly expressed. At the beginning of his narration of the Tyrian episode, Curtius states,

Magnitudo belli, quod ab opulentissimis Europae Asiaeque regibus in spem totius orbis occupandi gerebatur, Graeciae quoque et Cretae arma commoverat. Agis, Lacedaemoniorum rex, octo milibus Graecorum, qui ex Cilicia profugi domos repetierant, contractis bellum Antipatro, Macedoniae praefecto, moliebatur. Cretenses has aut illas partes secuti nunc Spartanorum, nunc Macedonum praesidiis occupabantur. Sed leviora inter illos fuere discrimina unum certamen, ex quo cetera pendebant, intuente fortuna.

'The great war which was being waged by the most powerful kings of Europe and Asia in the hope of getting control of the whole world had set in motion the arms also of Greece and of Crete. Agis, king of the Lacedaemonians, having assembled the eight thousand

Alexander in the East, see Arrian, *Anab.* iv.18.7. Arrians states that three hundred darics were offered as a prize for the soldiers attempting to scale the Rock of Sogdiana.

Greeks who had fled from Cilicia and returned home, was undertaking a war with Antipater, governor of Macedonia. The Cretans, who had sided first with one party and then with the other, had their country occupied by garrisons now of the Spartans, now of the Macedonians. But the crises among these were of slight importance, since Fortune had her eyes fixed upon one contest on which all the rest depended.' (QCR iv.1.38-40)

This is certainly dramatic scene-setting by Curtius, which led Atkinson to pejoratively assess Curtius' political and strategic analysis of the siege of Tyre in relation to the rest of the war. Atkinson's misgivings are understandable as it is not pragmatically comprehensible why one would imbue the taking of Tyre with such universal significance, unless it was being considered ideologically as we have been doing thus far. Instead of questioning why Curtius considered or presented the taking of this particular city as paramount and decisive to the overall war, Atkinson simply dismissed it as an author 'primarily concerned with the dramatic value of his narrative'.⁴⁰⁵ Yet, one should then question why Curtius would specifically elevate the siege of Tyre thus. Surely the battles of Issus and Gaugamela are more fitting scenes for the employment of this particular level of drama. It appears that Tyre is operating in Curtius' narrative as an ideological marker.

So far it does not appear to have been considered that Curtius may have been influenced by a dramatic prologue motif for the siege pre-existing within the Alexander tradition, which interacted with an ideological conceptualisation of the conquest of Tyre. In Curtius' prologue to the siege, it is emphasised that this is a war for dominion over the world. The respective hegemonic kings on each side of the struggle are elevated to narrative protagonists and we are informed that Fortune has set her sight upon the battle for Tyre and made it decisive.⁴⁰⁶ Thus, our absent antagonist becomes present in the narrative. Despite playing no actual active part in the defence of Tyre, the siege is envisioned in Curtius as a battle for universal supremacy between Alexander and Darius. Further, the use of vocabulary by Curtius engenders the visualising of a heroic contest between our protagonist

⁴⁰⁵ Atkinson1980:290-292.

⁴⁰⁶ See Baynham (1998:119) for this as an engagement with the theme of *fortuna* running through Curtius' narrative.

and antagonist.⁴⁰⁷ Therefore, we are presented with a comparable contest for the Cedar Mountain in Alexander's narrative tradition. It is focused upon a conceptual battle between our rising protagonist king, Alexander, and the declining antagonist king, Darius.

As opposed to the protestation by Darius concerning his continued relationship with the sun god in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, in Curtius we are presented with a letter immediately after the siege that appears to recognise the ideological significance of the city's capture. Significantly, and comparable to Humbaba's first address to a victorious Gilgamesh in the *SB Epic*, Darius recognises his adversary's elevation and addresses Alexander as 'king' for the first time,

Isdem ferme diebus Darei litterae adlatae sunt tandem ut regi scriptae. Petebat, uti filiam suam — Statirae erat nomen — nuptiis Alexander sibi adiungeret: dotem fore omnem regionem inter Hellespontum et Halyn amnem sitam, inde orientem spectantibus terris contentum se fore.

'At about that same time a letter of Darius was brought, at last written as to a king. He asked that Alexander should take to wife his daughter; her name was Statira; that her dowry would be the entire region lying between the Hellespont and the Halys River, and that Darius would be content with the lands extending eastward from that river. (QCR iv.5.1)⁴⁰⁸

Curtius is noticeable vague about the exact timing of the letter's arrival, but it is his placing of it directly after the siege of Tyre that is of significance to our discussion.⁴⁰⁹ As stated above, this parallels the positioning of a letter from Darius

⁴⁰⁷ As Rutz (1965:371; followed by Atkinson 1980:292) has argued, the use of the word *certamen* for the contest between the two great kings invokes scenes of the Circus, and Fortuna is installed as narrative spectator supporting the imagery.

⁴⁰⁸ This appears to be part of a motif within Alexander's narrative tradition of three communications (letters, alternatively envoys) sent by Darius to Alexander. The quoted letter represents the second communication in Curtius (*first* QCR iv.1.7-14; *third* QCR iv.11). The first is arrogant in tone, the second offers alliance, territory and a daughter in marriage, the third offers further territory, a daughter in marriage, and more overtly share in the rule of the empire. This three-letter motif is clearest in Justin (xi.12) where they are all dealt with together. Arrian (*Anab.* ii.14; ii.25) presents only two letters; Diodorus (xvii.39.1-2; xvii.54) has three communications, but two are presented together after Issus and one is claimed to be a forgery by Alexander. For further discussions of these diplomatic interactions present in the Greco-Roman 'historical' narratives see, for example, Bosworth 1980:227-333; 256-257; Bloedow 1995; Baynham 1998:150-155; Briant 2002:832-840.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. Arrian, *Anab.* ii.25.1-3, who states that the letter arrived from Darius during the siege of Tyre offering Darius' daughter in marriage and all the lands West of the Euphrates; Plut. *Alex.* 29.4, who presents a letter that offers a daughter of Darius' in marriage and all of the lands West of the Euphrates as part of a treaty of alliance. Plutarch isn't specific about when exactly the letter arrives,

to Alexander in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, albeit with opposite sentiments expressed. It is this narrative situating of these interactions between our antagonist and protagonist that helps emphasise their identification as a reaction to the outcome of the attack on the Cedar Mountain (Tyre). In the letter presented in Curtius, Darius seems to accept the decree of fate and looks to come to terms with Alexander. He dutifully acknowledges the Macedonian as king, offers to cede territory to him, and proposes marriage between Alexander and his daughter.⁴¹⁰

Briant makes an argument against any genuine offers to cede territory to Alexander by Darius, but this is based largely on *a priori* assumptions. Although Briant makes some valid points highlighting the need to approach these communications with caution and to treat them sceptically, Darius' continued preparation for further military action does not preclude diplomatic overtures. The Macedonians represented a continuing threat to Persian territory and so one would expect co-existing diplomatic and martial attempts to resolve the crisis. Further, it is difficult to understand how Briant can assert that the Halys River and Euphrates borders have 'no gauge of Achaemenid authenticity'.⁴¹¹ Therefore, it is possible that these natural borders could have been redeployed during the exceptional circumstances of Alexander's invasion. The Halys River represented not only a natural border, but

but it appears in his narrative when Alexander has returned to Phoenicia (Tyre) after Egypt. Significantly, all three narratives appear to have comparable letters arriving from Darius to Alexander, whilst he is at Tyre.

⁴¹⁰ Two different specific offers of territory are made by Darius in the Alexander narratives: the lands West of the Halys river (Diod. xvii.39.1; QCR iv.5.1); and the lands West of the Euphrates (Arrian, *Anab.* ii.25.1; Plut. Alex. 29.4; QCR iv.11.5; Diod. xvii.54.1-2).

⁴¹¹ Briant 2002:832-840. Two qualifications about the territorial offers are worth noting: firstly, the Halys River was understood to represent the pre-Cyrus border between the Lydian Empire and the Median Empire (HDT i.72.2; QCR iv.11.5). Considering Herodotus was a subject of the Persian Empire and from the relative region, it is interesting that Briant chooses to discard this as 'Greek' evidence. The Persian Empire was vast and Herodotus surely represents a local perspective or understanding. The presentation in the narratives of Alexander co-opting local royal positions/identities in Western Asia Minor (for examples, see Lydia, Caria, and Phrygia; Arrian, *Anab.* i.17.3-8; i.23.7-8; ii.3) could plausibly have led to a pre-Issus and post-Issus politico-cultural ideology in narrative representation of a successor empire in the West; secondly, the Euphrates represents a natural and continuous Mesopotamian border between regions from at least the Neo-Assyrian period to the Achaemenid period. The Macedonians were campaigning and conquering *Ebir Nāri* 'beyond the river' (more specifically identified as 'Transeuphratia' in scholarship), thus making the Euphrates a plausible recognisable limit. Briant's assertion that this recognised Mesopotamia border should be discarded because Arrian and Curtius mention the 'Greek Sea' and the 'Hellespont' as the opposing end of this ceded territory 'clearly representing an Aegeocentric view of the Achaemenid world', seems to completely disregard the currently conquered territory at this point in the narratives.

a good example of an ideological border in any narrative representation approximate to the Battle of Issus. The Euphrates also represented a substantial natural border and a culturally substantiated limit separating Mesopotamia from territories to the West.

This is a softening of Briant's argument that this represented Macedonian propaganda (plausible), settling on it representing the engagement of pre-existing ideological limits within the narrative tradition. This study can afford such luxury as any possible historical reality behind the diplomatic interactions is not directly relevant. Our focus is on the employment and placement of these diplomatic interactions in the narratives. The Halys River border seems to be more comfortably located in Diodorus than Curtius, as its proximity to Issus in the narrative appears to suit the offered territory better. One may consider that Curtius' utilisation of this territorial limit in his post-Tyre offer was predicated by the presence of the third letter and extension of the territory ceded later in the author's own narrative. It is not entirely clear beyond the current discussion why Arrian would present Darius ceding all of Transeuphratia prior to the taking of Tyre, Gaza, and Egypt. Compare Arrian's placement with the more reconcilable positioning of the offer in Plutarch. It is even more reconcilable with the 'real' events of the invasion thus far when the offer is made before Gaugamela in Diodorus' and Curtius' narratives. It seems that the placement of the offer during the siege of Tyre in Arrian's narrative may at least be partly explained in relation to the influence of our Tyrian conceptualisation within the Alexander tradition. Tyre was again being understood to symbolically represent the right to dominion over a much larger territory.

In addition to these liminal motifs, the offer of a daughter in marriage represents a serious narrative concession. This offer may be considered tantamount to confirming Alexander as his son and successor across the entire empire, something that Diodorus overtly states in his pre-Gaugamela correspondence between our antagonist and protagonist,

περὶ δὲ διαλύσεως καὶ πρότερον μὲν ἐξέπεμψε πρεσβευτὰς πρὸς Ἀλέξανδρον, ἐκχωρῶν αὐτῷ τῆς ἐντὸς Ἰλίου ποταμοῦ χώρας, καὶ προσεπηγγέλλετο δώσειν ἀργυρίου τάλαντα δισμύρια. ὥς δ' οὐ προσεῖχεν αὐτῷ, πάλιν ἐξέπεμψεν ἄλλους πρέσβεις, ἐπαινῶν μὲν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ καλῶς κεχρησθαι τῇ τε μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις αἰχμαλώτοις, ἀξιῶν δὲ φίλον γενέσθαι καὶ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐντὸς Εὐφράτου χώραν καὶ τάλαντ' ἀργυρίου τρισμύρια καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν τῶν ἑαυτοῦ θυγατέρων γυναῖκα, καθόλου δὲ γενόμενον γαμβρὸν καὶ τάξιν υἱοῦ λαβόντα καθάπερ κοινωνὸν γενέσθαι τῆς ὅλης βασιλείας.

'On the other hand, just as he had previously sent envoys to Alexander to treat for peace, offering to concede to him the land west of the Halys River, and also to give him twenty thousand talents of silver, but Alexander would not agree, so now again Dareios sent other envoys praising Alexander for his generous treatment of Dareios's mother and the other captives and inviting him to become a friend. He offered him all the territory west of the Euphrates, thirty thousand talents of silver, and the hand of one of his daughters. Alexander would become Dareios's son-in-law and occupy the place of a son, while sharing in the rule of the whole empire.'
(Diodorus, xvii.54.1-2)

Although this is presented prior to the Battle of Gaugamela in Diodorus, it parallels the offer of a daughter in marriage to Alexander at Tyre in Plutarch, Arrian, and Curtius. This narrative positioning in these three authors seems to further exemplify the transition and elevation of Alexander's kingship in his narrative tradition due to his campaign to and conquest of the Cedar Mountain. Alexander is being recognised in the narratives as the future hegemonic king.

4.2.6 The Cedar Mountains as a microcosm revisited for the Alexander narratives

That the taking of the Cedar Mountain (Tyre) at the Upper Sea represented a portent for Alexander's overall victory in the war and conquest of the empire demonstrates that an ideological microcosm was being engaged. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider whether further engagement with the Levantine microcosm discussed above for the Gilgamesh tradition can be detected within the Alexander tradition. A potential example of this engagement is Alexander's campaign against the Arabs during the siege of Tyre,

διὰ μέσου δὲ τῆς πολιορκίας ἐπὶ τοὺς Ἀραβας τοὺς προσικοῦντας τῷ Ἀντιλίβανῳ στρατεύσας ἐκινδύνευσε διὰ τὸν παιδαγωγὸν Λυσίμαχον: ἐξηκολούθησε γὰρ αὐτῷ λέγων τοῦ Φοίνικος οὐκ εἶναι χείρων οὐδὲ πρεσβύτερος

'While the siege of the city was in progress, he made an expedition against the Arabians who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Mount Antilibanus. On this expedition he risked his life

to save his tutor, Lysimachus, who insisted on following him, declaring himself to be neither older nor weaker than Phoenix.'
(Plut. *Alex.* 24.6)⁴¹²

Arrian, like Plutarch, locates this campaign against the Arabs on Mount Antilebanon (Mount Sirara). Arrian's claim that the campaign was in the direction of Arabia is broadly reconcilable with this, but the locating of the campaign in Curtius is more confusing. Curtius claims that whilst the Macedonians were on Mount Lebanon felling trees they were attacked by Arabians.⁴¹³ An attack upon the Macedonians by Arabs this far North is not inconceivable, as it is clear from Strabo and Pliny that Arabians had penetrated and settled as far as Mount Lebanon during antiquity.⁴¹⁴ However, Curtius then goes on to state that Alexander campaigned into Arabia as a consequence.⁴¹⁵ This is more difficult to reconcile and presents us with some ambiguity that requires further discussion. From first appearances it would appear that we potentially have action in two directions within Curtius' narrative of the campaign.⁴¹⁶ It is not clear from Curtius why Alexander would not have to secure the Mount Lebanon region before campaigning towards the South, or why Alexander would campaign to the South when the attack occurred to the North.

⁴¹² Curtius (iv.2.24-3.7) and Arrian (*Anab.* ii.20.4-5) both also mention campaigns by Alexander against Arabs during the siege of Tyre.

⁴¹³ It should be noted that here Curtius presents us with a scene where the Macedonians are felling trees (possibly cedar) on Mount Lebanon. Cf. Diod. xvi.42.6: ὁ δ' Ἀλέξανδρος εἰς ἀμηχανίαν ἐμπίπτων διὰ τὴν αὐτόματον τῶν ἔργων φθορὰν μετεμέλετο μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς πολιορκίας ἐπιβολῇ, ὁμῶς δὲ τῇ φιλοτιμίᾳ προαγόμενος ἐκ τῆς ὀρεινῆς ἐκκόπτων ὑπερμεγέθη δένδρα παρεκόμεζε καὶ σὺν αὐτοῖς τοῖς κλάδοις ἐγχώσας ἐνέφραξε τὴν βίαν τοῦ κλύδωνος. 'Alexander was at a loss to deal with the harm done to his project by the forces of nature and thought of giving up the siege attempt, but driven by ambition he sent to the mountain and felling huge trees, he brought them branches and all and, placing them beside the mole, broke the force of the waves.'

⁴¹⁴ Strabo, *Geography*, xvi.2.18; Pliny, *NH*, vi.32. Pliny mainly attributes this to the later deportations of Tigranes the Great, but also states voluntary migration as a mechanism. It is evident that Arabians settled up to and beyond the Fertile Crescent in earlier periods (Eph'al 1982; Fisher 2015:2-6; Macdonald 2015), thus supporting the possibility of Arabs settled locally to Mount Lebanon at the time of Alexander's invasion.

⁴¹⁵ Curtius is the only one of the three authors to provide a motivation for the 'Arabian' campaign, namely defensive and retaliatory. This detail in Curtius is surely behind the assessment by scholars such as Bosworth (1988a:65), Green (1991:252-255), Briant (2002:831), Retso (2003:265), and Lane Fox (2004:185-186) that this was a punitive campaign. Briant (2002:831) goes further and tentatively suggests that the Arabian attack on the Macedonians in Curtius may have been part of a centralised defence policy. Retso (2003:265) likewise considers this attack to be a strategic device rather than improvised raiding.

⁴¹⁶ This is understood in relation to 'Arabia' being approximately located towards the Arabian Peninsula. For discussions of the extent of Arabia in antiquity, see Bowersock 1983; 1994:363-369; Hoyland 2001; and Fisher 2015.

Retso opted to conclude that the north-eastern raid by the Arabs against the Macedonians on Mount Lebanon was the work of a south-eastern based Arab community. This is a plausible attempt to tidy up the confusion and ambiguity across the narratives. Retso actually went further and claimed that it is clear from all three sources that the campaign was against the Arabs of Mount Antilebanon.⁴¹⁷ Yet Curtius makes no mention of Mount Antilebanon in his narrative, and Plutarch and Arrian likewise make no mention of Mount Lebanon in their narratives. In fact, it appears that Plutarch, and possibly Arrian, may have been even more precise with their locating of the campaign than Retso gives them credit for. Note how Plutarch takes care in his narrative to point out that the campaign onto Mount Antilebanon was against Arabians who dwelt there rather than against Arabia itself.⁴¹⁸ This is probably predicated on the understanding that Mount Antilebanon itself does not align with a conventional identification of this ambiguous designation, Arabia.⁴¹⁹ Therefore, Curtius' statement that the campaign was against Arabia seems to diverge from the locating of the campaign in the other two sources. Even if Retso's locating of those responsible for the Mount Lebanon raid is accepted, the narrative accounts are not wholly joined.⁴²⁰

The complicated geography of the action in the sources led Kuhrt to identify Alexander's expedition against the Arabs as one against the inhabitants of the Beqaa Valley, which in Curtius was designated 'Arabia'.⁴²¹ Kuhrt's more general locating of the campaign seems plausible and appealing. It has taken the care to address the circumstances that the action of the Arab campaign was located in two opposing directions in Curtius' narrative. Further, her assessment means that we do

⁴¹⁷ Retso 2003:265. Accordingly, he asserts that a new Arab group 'emerge into the light of history' at this point.

⁴¹⁸ Plutarch, *Alex.* 24.6.

⁴¹⁹ For the broad use of the term 'Arab' in antiquity, but more limited use of 'Arabia' see, Eph'al 1982:5-12; 192-214; Millar 1993:511-515. Note that Xenophon's (*Anabasis* i.5) presentation of Cyrus the Younger's march through 'Arabia' appears to be located in the area of Middle Euphrates with the Khabur River as its northern frontier (Musil 1927:217; 221-223; Eph'al 1982:202). This is possibly the most northern location for an 'Arabia' in antiquity, but it is located to the East around the Euphrates and does not stretch anywhere near enough to the West to encourage us to alter our conclusion about the region under discussion.

⁴²⁰ Note that Polyaeus (iv.3.4) also locates the campaign against Arabia, just as Curtius does. Polyaeus makes no mention of either mountain.

⁴²¹ Kuhrt 2007:443; Green 1991:251-255.

not require such a distant raid from the Arabs located around Mount Antilebanon.⁴²² However, that the Beqaa Valley can confidently be designated as Arabia is more difficult to accept. Perhaps I am being too rigid here, but one must be extremely pliable to stretch Arabia across the Beqaa Valley. It is possibly that all three Alexander narratives use the cultural designation 'Arab' and the region designation 'Arabia' in a broad sense, however, Curtius' northern reaches of the action and Arrian's inferable progression of the campaign are less reconcilable with even the broadest usage of the terms during antiquity.⁴²³ It seems that the use of the terms 'Arab' and 'Arabia' in the narratives present us with a considerable amount of ambiguity and uncertainty regarding the campaign. This may have originally been intentional.

It is possible that we are dealing with a blind motif detailing an ideological campaign. Plutarch's account overtly engages with mythological and ideological parallels by drawing Homeric comparisons, making a myth-imbued narrative account of the Arab campaign evident.⁴²⁴ Alexander is presented engaging in a campaign that stretches across the rift valley and onto the Anti-Lebanon and Lebanon mountain ranges during the siege of Tyre. This opens up the possibility of full engagement within the Alexander tradition of the topographical microcosm of Lebanon and Sirara detected with the Gilgamesh tradition. The Macedonian king confronts an enemy somewhat geographically ambiguous. Although the campaign may be understood to occupy the Beqaa Valley and its composite mountain ranges, Arabs and Arabia can be understood to stretch to the Lower Sea.⁴²⁵

⁴²² Note that Arrian (*Anab.* ii.19.6; 20.5) states that Alexander both started and concluded the Arab campaign at Sidon. This potentially supports the crossing of both mountain ranges and the valley during the campaign. This detail is Arrian makes it difficult to reject Curtius as simply inaccurate.

⁴²³ For examples, see Strabo, *Geography*, xvi.4; Ptolemy, *Geography* v.17; 19; vi.7; Pliny, *NH*, vi.32; even Trajan's supposed creation of the province of Roman Arabia in the second century CE doesn't extent 'Arabia' as a region this far North (Bowersock 1983:76-109). It is possible that Arrian and Plutarch have this Roman designation of Arabia in mind; Arabia does not appear to have extended this far North in Ptolemy (Bowersock 1994; Berggren & Jones 2000:136-139; 169; pl.2-3; 5-6); Pliny seems to be the only source that plausibly offers such a 'Northern Arabia', but it appears even here it is the settlement of Arabs and not the identification of Arabia that is being asserted.

⁴²⁴ Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 5.5.

⁴²⁵ Eph'al 1982; Groom 1986; Bowersock 1994:363-369; Hoyland 2001. Cf. Arrian, *Anab.* iii.1.2: Μαζάκης δὲ ὁ Πέρσης, ὃς ἦν σατράπης Αἰγύπτου ἐκ Δαρείου καθεστηκώς, τήν τε ἐν Ἰσῶ μάχην ὅπως συνέβη πεπυσμένος καὶ Δαρεῖον ὅτι αἰσχροῖ φυγῇ ἔφυγεν, καὶ Φοινίκην τε καὶ Συρίαν καὶ τῆς

Therefore, it is possible to view the 'Arabian' campaign in Curtius, Plutarch, and Arrian as representative of an alternative expression of the Beqaa Valley microcosm motif more comprehensible than Sirara during later periods. By campaigning across the Beqaa Valley microcosm, Alexander may also be considered as campaigning simultaneously at the Upper and Lower Sea. It is conspicuous that in the three Alexander narratives we are on the familiar Mount Lebanon and Mount Antilebanon (Sirara) of the Gilgamesh microcosm, and further that Curtius connects this campaign with securing the right to fell trees (plausibly cedar) on these famous mountains. These are also the same three narratives that connect an offer of familial alliance and ceded territory at Tyre, therefore connecting two of the motifs argued for the microcosm within the same narratives. It appears to have been completely unnoticed thus far in scholarship that in Alexander's narrative tradition we have the Macedonian king campaigning, as Mesopotamian predecessors had, to Mounts Lebanon and Sirara to secure the valuable timber. This engagement with the Beqaa Valley microcosm, whether considered blind or semi-blind in the Alexander narratives, strengthens the case for our contextualisation of the episode.

It also seamlessly allows me to shift the analysis from Levantine Sirara to Sirara on the Persian Gulf. Alexander's supposed plans for this region (and the evident subsequent designation of places in the Gulf with Phoenician toponyms) seem to engage with another aspect of the microcosm, namely the duplication of the Upper

Ἀραβίας τὰς πολλὰ ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου ἐχόμενα, αὐτῷ τε οὐκ οὔσης δυνάμεως Περσικῆς, ἐδέχετο ταῖς τε πόλεσι φιλίως καὶ τῇ χώρᾳ Ἀλέξανδρον 'Mazaces the Persian, who had been appointed satrap of Egypt by Darius, on learning how the battle of Issus had gone, of the shameful flight of Darius, and that Phoenicia, Syria, and the greater part of Arabia were in Alexander's hands, and being without any Persian force, received Alexander in a friendly way into the cities and the country.' It is possible that Arrian has Roman Arabia in mind at this point, but that would imply that this passage and reasoning for Mazaces' surrender is the work of Arrian himself, or a very near contemporary of him. Even then, it is not clear why Arrian would say the greater part of Arabia had been conquered and not specifically the province. Arrian would surely have been aware that Roman Arabia only represented a fraction of Arabia. Therefore, this may represent further engagement with the microcosm as Alexander's Beqaa Valley campaign represented ideologically a campaign across Arabia to the Lower Sea. Thus, it is left to the reader to conclude whether this assessment of Mazaces' motivations was the work of Arrian himself or the result of narrative influence from a pre-existing source. Note that Pliny (*NH* xii.32) provides anecdotal evidence for a tradition of Alexander conquering Arabia, something that Alexander never actually achieved; cf. Plutarch (*Alex.* 25.4-5) for the placement of this anecdote after the siege of Gaza. Potts (1990b:9-10) attributes the tradition of Alexander subduing Arabia to the campaign into Arabia during the siege of Tyre attested Curtius.

Sea frontier at the Lower Sea. Arrian tells us that Alexander planned on colonising the Persian Gulf and its islands, as he expected it to become just as prosperous a country as Phoenicia.⁴²⁶ Arrian then focuses his account on two particular islands, one of which is presented as somewhat idyllic and identified as Tylus (also Tylos/Tyros).⁴²⁷ The connection with the Phoenician island of Tyre is obvious even without Alexander's stated plans. Yet it is conspicuous that Alexander is presented planning to duplicate the conceptual Upper Sea frontier at the frontier on Lower Sea, an act ideologically in-keeping with Mesopotamian royal antecedents. However, this was not just a conceptual idea. It became an imperial reality as locations on the Persian Gulf became known by familiar Phoenician place names.⁴²⁸

This is indicative of the significance of this ideology in the re-creation of real space. Levantine Sirara becomes a Sirara proper as the early tradition takes hold, just as an ingrained tradition of Cedar Mountains on the Persian Gulf infects Mesopotamian 'reality'. Thus the Persian Gulf has already been seen to take on topographical traits of the eastern Mediterranean. Therefore, the re-branding of the Persian Gulf with a distinctly Phoenician character is considered to be consistent with the 'spill over' of this ideological conceptualisation in real world designations of place. The specifics also have a degree of antiquity. This is because the Phoenician connection with the Persian Gulf cannot be wholly considered a Hellenistic period innovation. Herodotus relates an idea in his *Histories* that the Phoenicians originally came from the Persian Gulf taking the perceived relationship back to at least the fifth century BCE.⁴²⁹ Some have considered this to be a historical possibility, but I would argue that it more securely represents a trace of a comparable ideology of Upper and Lower Sea frontiers in the Teispid-Achaemenid period (albeit Herodotus presents

⁴²⁶ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.19.5.

⁴²⁷ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.20.3-6. Tylus/Tylos/Tyros is Dilmun (modern Bahrain; Bowersock 1986:309-406; Potts 1990b:125-153). The other island is designated 'Icarus' by the Macedonians in Arrian (modern Failaka; Potts 1990b:179-196).

⁴²⁸ For example: Arados, modern Muharraq; Tylus/Tylos/Tyros, modern Bahrain; Tyre, modern Sur in Oman; and Byblos, modern Jubayl in eastern Saudi Arabia (Potts 1990b:125-153). For Seleucid activity in the Persian Gulf, see Potts (1990b:10-22).

⁴²⁹ HDT vii.89.2; cf. i.180.1; 189.1.

the movement in the other direction).⁴³⁰ Yet one may plausibly take it back even further.

This is clearly a Mesopotamian ideology orientated on a Mesopotamian nexus. As we have seen Tyre and Dilmun were presented as the frontiers of empire at the Upper Sea and Lower Sea for the Neo-Assyrian king, Assurbanipal. The case has even been made for understanding Dilmun's original designation as 'Tylus' to stem from a hellenising of the Sargonid variation 'Tilmun'.⁴³¹ The conceptual duplication of frontiers is more easily placed in this period, and so one may reasonably expect Tyre and Dilmun to have somewhat syncretised from the Neo-Assyrian period onwards. It is certainly plausible that the Neo-Assyrians would have conceptually populated the Persian Gulf with Phoenician parallels. Such practices would extend Michalowski's theory of mental maps in Mesopotamia tradition to the full re-designation of actual space.⁴³² Therefore, although the Phoenician toponyms may not fully surface until Tilmun is manipulated in the Hellenistic period, it is plausible that the duplication of named places may go back much further, and that the conceptual connection between the Phoenicians and the Persian Gulf may be long-lived, but simply that. Either way, Alexander's presented intentions are once again conspicuously Mesopotamian, and imbued with royal and imperial ideology.

4.3 Opportunities for the contextualisation

During this chapter, it has been possible to be more targeted with the analysis when addressing the episode within the Alexander tradition compared to the expanse of the discussion for the Gilgamesh tradition in the previous chapter. This

⁴³⁰ E.g. Bowersock 1986:402; cf. Potts (1990b:139-141) for a summary of the debate in scholarship, and Kuhrt (1995:402-410) for the probable Canaanite origins of the Phoenicians.

⁴³¹ Eilers 1983:103; Potts 1990b:127.

⁴³² Cf. Michalowski 1986. Consider and compare the examples of Meluḫḫa and Magan in Mesopotamian tradition. Originally these referred to the far eastern reaches of the kings of Akkad in the Indus Valley and eastern Arabia (Oman) respectively, but in the Neo-Assyrian period are also shown to designated locales at the western reaches in North Africa (Weidner 1952-1953:7-11; Potts 1982; Heimpel 1987; 1987-1990; 1993; Michalowski 1988; Potts 1990a:133-150). Thus we have further evidence for the duplication of frontiers in Mesopotamian imperial tradition resulting in the re-designation of real space.

is because it was necessary to re-define or re-evaluate the episode within the Gilgamesh tradition before the comparison could be realised. Further, it is sometimes easier to be precise in the receptor tradition once the framework has been identified and elucidated in the transmitting tradition. In the process, I have presented a strong case for fresh readings of the episodes within their individual protagonist traditions, and clearly demonstrated that a comparable reading is possible for the episode between the traditions. This comparable reading has been connected through Mesopotamian kingship ideology making the path of transmission complex, but secure. I will return to the contents of these chapters during in my conclusions in chapter seven and will re-assess possible paths of transmission, but it may be of interest to briefly highlight here immediate opportunities present in the narratives where the Alexander tradition may have imported the themes and motifs of this type of episode.

There would have been ample opportunity for a narrative conceptualisation of Alexander's conquest of Tyre in parallel to Gilgamesh's campaign against Humbaba. It is plausible that much would have been made of Alexander conquering Tyre in court performance at the time.⁴³³ The celebration of this mammoth achievement in performance, oral composition, even narrative could have seen Alexander and his siege of Tyre directly paralleled to Gilgamesh's taking of the Cedar Mountain and slaying of Humbaba. Alternatively, or even additionally, the parallel model may be transmitted via the narrative tradition of another king of Mesopotamia, such as those that I have identified for Assurbanipal and Nebuchadnezzar II. This would not necessarily be preclusive of direct connection to the Gilgamesh tradition. They may simply complement each other. Once a contextualisation like this had been presented at court, it would have impacted the narrative tradition as it infected the

⁴³³ Cf. Callisthenes' immediate narrative of Alexander's campaigning with mythological and ideological elements (Strabo, xvi.1.43; Polybius, xii.17-22); the performance ridiculing a recent battlefield defeat that supposedly roused Cleitus' ire (Plut. *Alex.* 50.4-6); and the anecdotal story of Onesicritus' performance (at the court of Lysimachus) narrating Alexander's encounter with the Amazons (Plut. *Alex.* 46.2). Also see, Carney 2003:53-63; Tritle 2009:122-129; Weber 2009:90-98. For Hellenistic royal courts, performance, and literature more generally, see Shipley 2000:235-270; Knippschild 2010; Strootman 2010.

memory of those present who would go on to recount the siege of Tyre both orally and in written text.

The narrative accounts of the conquest of Phoenicia and Palestine clearly demonstrate the influence of myth and the melding of traditions. As we have seen above, the Arabian campaign during the siege of Tyre was presented with Homeric associations in Plutarch. The Homeric connection is not limited solely to this, but also surfaces in Curtius' account of the siege of Gaza. Betis, the governor and defender of Gaza, suffers a fate comparable to that of Hector elevating Alexander to the position of Achilles, a parallel about which Curtius is overt.⁴³⁴ Further, it is clear that the story of the rise of king Abdalymous of Sidon represents the transmission and reception of Sargonic accession narrative.⁴³⁵ Whatever the path of transmission for this Mesopotamian narrative pattern to the tradition attached to the Sidonian monarch, it is conspicuous that it is functioning in the narratives as one would expect it to in the Near East, that is to explain abnormal succession.⁴³⁶ All of these examples engender an understanding that the conquest of the eastern Mediterranean within the Alexander narratives exhibits accounts of the campaigns that are considerably blurred by mythical and ideology allusions or conceptualisations. This makes the identification of the Gilgamesh and Humbaba parallels more understandable, as we are already presented with mythical traditions within the 'historical' narratives, and further some of these traditions have an obvious Near Eastern valency. That all three of these examples (Sargonic Abdalonymus, 'Humbaban' Tyre, and Homeric Gaza) are clearly present in Curtius' narrative may also help to explain why the parallels for the 'Humbaban' episode are also so strong in his work.

Having highlighted this, it is important to state that it would be an error to attempt to zero down on one author for variations or intertextuality of the sort discussed above. One could easily fall into the 'Alexander trap' of singling out sources and

⁴³⁴ QCR iv.6.25-29.

⁴³⁵ QCR iv.1.15-26; Burstein 2007.

⁴³⁶ Kuhrt 2003; cf. Drews 1974.

arguing that it was potentially Cleitarchus' narrative that first presented the parallels. This would seem plausible, due to the prominence of the contextualisation in Curtius, the reach into *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, and the reasonable assertion that it was a source utilised to some degree by Arrian, Plutarch, Diodorus, and Justin. However, a counter point to this could be that Plutarch names Chares as his source for the Antilebanon campaign narrative.⁴³⁷ Therefore, Chares could represent a natural choice for the author who transmitted this Mesopotamian-style campaign episode, but there are problems with this assessment too. Chares' account, recounted by Plutarch, has mutated or demonstrates the signs of further intertextuality, evident through the Homeric reference. Instead of being so arbitrary and determinative, we should consider that Chares, like many other authors and transmitters of Alexander narrative, would have been present at court, and observed court performances during and after campaigns.

We are told in the narratives that Alexander held games and celebrations after the conquest of Tyre. These celebrations were purportedly in honour of Herakles, and involved lavish ceremonial dedications to the god.⁴³⁸ Upon return from Egypt, we are again presented with an Alexander who held celebrations and theatrical performances at Tyre.⁴³⁹ All of these represent an opportunity where someone may have performed presenting Alexander in this heroic and royal Mesopotamian garb. Further, Alexander would shortly be in Babylon where this sort of conceptualisation of the siege would have been popular and ideologically significant. Consider Curtius' presentation of Alexander's entry into Babylon,

Magi deinde suo more carmen canentes, post hos Chaldaei Babyloniorumque non vates modo, sed etiam artifices cum fidibus sui generis ibant: laudes hi regum canere soliti, Chaldaei siderum motus et statas vices temporum ostendere.

'Then came the magi, chanting a hymn after their manner, after them the Chaldeans, and of the Babylonians not only their prophets, but also musicians with their own kind of

⁴³⁷ Plut. *Alex.* 24.8.

⁴³⁸ Diod. xvii.46.6; Arrian, *Anab.* ii.24.6.

⁴³⁹ Plut. *Alex.* 29.1-3; Arrian, *Anab.* iii.6.1; cf. QCR iv.8.16.

instruments; the latter were accustomed to sing the praises of the kings, the Chaldeans, to explain the movements of the heavenly bodies and the appointed changes of the seasons.' (QCR v.1.22)⁴⁴⁰

Significantly, in the quoted passage we are presented with the personnel and circumstances for a cultic temple performance (Magi and Chaldeans) as well as a performance at the royal court (musicians), both of which would have had a very Babylonian character.⁴⁴¹ One performance could be enough to introduce the contextualisation and motifs, and multiple performances are possible within the immediate period. Once it had been released into the court consciousness, the narrative contextualisation could not have been put back in the bottle. It is this potential 'patient zero' performance, or performances, that may best explain the cross-tradition identification of parallel motifs. As established tradition met the narrative creation of the new king's image it is probable that cultural motifs would have melded in a changing, but continuous court dialogue and dynamic. This would have plausibly led to the motifs of the Humbaba episode infecting the Alexander tradition and populating a variety of Alexander narratives.

⁴⁴⁰ Diod. xvii.64.3-4; QCR v.1.17-45; cf. Arrian (*Anab.* iii.16.5), where Alexander is instructed by the Chaldaeans upon his duties as the new king of Babylon. This potentially presents a ritual or temple setting for the parallel to have been offered. We may then consider the New Year (akitu) festival (a festival the king was expected to attend and participate in) and the recitation of the *Enuma Elish* on the fourth day. The text detailing this practice in the Late Babylonian (Seleucid) period is fragmentary and so the instruction for the first and the sixth to eleventh days of the festival do not survive, opening up the possibility that other narratives were recited (Langdon 1923:20-28; Thureau-Dangin 1921:127-154; spec. 136 for transliteration and 153 for cuneiform, tablet obverse MNB. 1848 II.21-24). It should be noted here that it is specifically stated in the *SB Epic*, iii.31-32 that the akitu festival will be performed twice upon Gilgamesh's return from the Cedar Mountain (George 2003:574-575). With the elucidated ideology, the comparable stripping of the king's robes and striking in the face as his continued position as king is considered by Marduk (cf. Bidmead 2002:77-83), bears striking similarities to the scene detailing the stripping and striking of Huwawa in *GH A*, 144-151 (Edzard 1991:208-218; George 1999:156-158; cf. Shaffer 1983:308-310). It is possible to consider that something akin to the Sumerian poem was ritually connected to the akitu festival and performed during it down to the time of the Successors.

⁴⁴¹ For the Neo-Sumerian *Gilgamesh* poems as court literature in the Ur III period, see George 2003:7. For a tablet of the *SB Epic* found in a seventh-century BCE library of chief singers in the Neo-Assyrian court at Assur, see Pedersen 1986:34-41; Westenholz 1992:152-153; West 1997a:181-187; George 2003:34-35; 405-406. Therefore, one may seriously entertain the possibility that episodes about Gilgamesh were being performed at the seventh-century Neo-Assyrian court (Cf. George 2007a). For continuity in the Persian period of court performance and composition of royal narratives, see Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, i.2.1; Strabo, xv.3.18; Athenaeus, xiv.633. Note that Briant attributes the transmission of these tales to the Magi (Briant 2002:330; 2015:169-171). Cf. the account of the Persian story of Odatis and Prince Zariadres related by Chares of Mytilene (Athenaeus, xiii.575; cf. Boyce 1955). This clearly demonstrates that the source material and character of performances at Alexander's court were not in any way exclusively Graeco-Macedonian (cf. Knippschild 2010).

Chapter Five

The death of the king: the primary episode for the mythical wanderings of accession

5.1 Chapter introduction and outline

Chapters three and four provided fresh insight and new readings for the respective 'Humbaban' episodes within the narrative traditions of our protagonist kings of Mesopotamia, Gilgamesh and Alexander. I have argued that these episodes engaged with the transfer of hegemony, detailing the succession of the great king and the ratification of this transfer of power through conquest. The exegesis of the narratives in both traditions identified and contributed to the understanding of an imperial and ideological geography, which conceptualised the great king's domain from a Mesopotamian nexus. Utilising these themes of Mesopotamian kingship, legitimisation, the transfer of power, and succession, I will now go on to argue over the next two chapters for a re-contextualisation of the episode where Gilgamesh and Alexander have been paralleled in scholarship up to this point. This is through their respective mythical wanderings into and beyond passages of darkness.⁴⁴² Loosely, this has covered Tablets IX-XI in the *SB Epic of Gilgamesh* and the so-called 'First Miracle Letter' in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (ii.23-41), although as stated in chapters one and two of this study I will extend the discussion beyond these parameters. Instead of focusing upon the quest for immortality, which has pre-occupied much of the discussion of the comparison up to this point, I will continue to present these narratives through the lens of Mesopotamian kingship.⁴⁴³ The king's desire to escape the inevitability of death is only part of the picture and in many ways this dominant motif obscures the complex subtleties of succession that are also being narrated within these episodes.

⁴⁴² For examples, see Meissner 1894; Henkelman 2010.

⁴⁴³ For examples of this pre-occupation, see some core studies of this episode by Meissner 1894; Friedlaender 1910; 1913; Stoneman 1992; Henkelman 2010.

It is the continuing contention of this study that the parallels between the two narrative traditions can be better understood and more securely substantiated by contextualising them in Mesopotamian kingship, an office that both protagonists are understood to have held and exercised. The comparable episodes represent examples of institutionalised narrative structures within Mesopotamian kingship tradition that firmly secured royal action and transition in a continuous ideological landscape. The episodes being analysed in these two chapters are understood by the author of this study to engage with the death of a king and the accession of his 'natural' successor, i.e. not necessarily his son, but one conceptually positioned thus. I have already stated, yet it bears repeating that this departure is not a commentary on the validity of the humanist exegesis of the narrative traditions concerning our protagonists, but simply represents an alternative set of criteria for entextualisation. I will argue that although the search for immortality and the failure to achieve it are integral to both traditions, in neither should it be understood as primary, but instead as a pseudo-motive present in immature protagonists.

As I have already stated in chapter one, I have no intention of repeating the work of others wholesale in this specific area of comparison between our protagonists. Instead I intend to contribute to the case for the comparison by expanding the discussion of the episodes into new dimensions of analysis. These alternative readings will be approached primarily through the establishment of the 'primary episode' and catalyst for the 'secondary episode' of the wanderings in our subject traditions.⁴⁴⁴ This 'primary episode', which will be the subject of the present chapter, is the death of the king in each tradition. After this has been established, I will then present in chapter six the perilous mythical wanderings as a journey to the limits and to knowledge that the acceding king must navigate. At its core, this journey was connected with legitimisation and preparing the successor to rule. These wanderings will naturally force us to revisit and expand upon the imperial and ideological geography presented thus far. Regarding the leitmotif of the pursuit

⁴⁴⁴ See chapter one for a discussion of this terminology.

of immortality, I will address this intermittently, where relevant. However, note that it is understood in relation to the ideological requirements and aspirations of kingship in Mesopotamia. With the outline for the chapters ahead thus provided, I will begin, as our wanderings do, with the death of the king.

5.2 The death of the king

The two royal deaths to which I refer are those of Enkidu and Darius III. Whilst the latter is obviously the death of the great king, the former is less clear and requires a more detailed argument to substantiate the claim. This is because it is the death of the great king as represented through a substitute. This should not be understood as literally representative of the evident Substitute King Ritual in Mesopotamian kingship, but as engaging with what underlies its existence and enactment.⁴⁴⁵ This is the utility of substitutes to save the royal person in Mesopotamian literature and culture. For example, consider *Inanna's Descent*, where we see the substitution of the king Dumuzi, for the divine, but royal Inanna, and the alternating substitution of Dumuzi's sister (Geštin-ana) and Dumuzi himself.⁴⁴⁶

Inanna's liberation from death is presented in the narrative in ambiguous terms where she is clearly understood to represent both the dead king and/or the dead queen. This assertion is not the product of an abstract exercise in semiotics, but instead something overtly stated in the text during the seemingly ritualistic exchange between Ereshkigal, the queen of the netherworld, and *kurgara* and *galatura*, the subordinates of Enki sent to retrieve Inanna,

'The corpse is that of your queen.'

They said to her: 'Whether it is that of our king or that of our queen, give it to us.'
(*Inanna's Descent*, 277-278)⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁵ For the Substitute King Ritual, see Labat 1945-1946; Lambert 1957-58; 1959-1960; Parpola 1983b:xxii-xxxii; Bottero 1992:138-155.

⁴⁴⁶ *Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld* (Kramer 1961:83-96; Sladek 1974; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:65-76); cf. Ferrara 2006 for the OB period dating of the *ID* tablets.

⁴⁴⁷ *Inanna's Descent*, 277-278 (Sladek 1974:137; 174; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:73).

This abrupt identification of Inanna with both the dead king and the dead queen is startling, or at least it should be. One might expect a royal identification for the goddess here, but the response of Enki's subordinates seems to be intentionally ambiguous. It extends the scene to encompass either and both of the royal couple, but more significantly it releases the character of Inanna from any gender determinism. It is openly stated that in this context she may be understood to also represent the king, not just his divine spouse.⁴⁴⁸ It appears clear that in this scene we are being presented with the retrieval of the royal personage from the netherworld, not simply the Sumerian goddess. When one combines this with the realisation that the response by his subordinates was the result of an explicit instruction by Enki, one is encouraged to consider the possibility that this is actual imbedded ritual dialogue.⁴⁴⁹ It is conspicuous that Inanna's name is not used in this prescribed exchange. Such ambiguity or generality appears to be indicative of a connection to the office rather than the individual. Therefore, this scene can be better understood as the retrieval of the royal office of kingship rather than the specific royal person who has died and descended.

Inanna's ultimate escape from death and the netherworld through substitution in the narrative should be seen as an extension of this retrieval.⁴⁵⁰ The substitution serves as a sort of final demand or settlement for the release of the royal Inanna, whilst the initial scenes of her 'death' and return symbolically narrate the descent of kingship into the netherworld and its retrieval.⁴⁵¹ The substitution and retrieval of the kingship are not preclusive of each other, and they actually harmonise well

⁴⁴⁸ Note Ishtar's (an Akkadian equivalent of Inanna) role as a warrior goddess, who fights for the king in battle (or more accurately, the idea that the king is victorious in battle through Ishtar's agency), means that her association and identification with the king can be detected elsewhere in Mesopotamian kingship ideology. For examples, see *Prism of Esarhaddon*, col.i. 58-78 (Campbell Thompson 1931:11-12), and the *Rassam Cylinder* of Assurbanipal, 807-808 (Luckenbill 1927:308-309). Cf. Nevling Porter 2004.

⁴⁴⁹ *Inanna's Descent*, 249-250 (Sladek 1974:134; 172; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:72).

⁴⁵⁰ *Inanna's Descent*, 284ff (Sladek 1974:138-152; 175-181; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:73-75).

⁴⁵¹ Cf. Inanna's adornment in royal attire before embarking on the journey and her initial enthronement before judgement (*Inanna's Descent* 14-25; 165-172; Sladek 1974:104-106; 123-124; 154-155; 165-166; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:66; 70-71). Also see Sladek's (1974:71-85) discussion of Inanna's attire.

when one understands that every royal death conceptually, even practically, involves the sacrifice of the current king's body/soul for the accession of the succeeding candidate. The office of kingship may be continuous, but the substitution or replacement of the mortal body that holds the office is intrinsic to succession. It is clear from the passage quoted above and the extended narrative that *Inanna's Descent* bears this contextualisation and so should be understood in a more sophisticated manner as engaging with the ideology of continuity in Mesopotamian kingship through succession, and not simply death and renewal. Let us not forget that in the end it is the king Dumuzi who takes Inanna's place in the netherworld, thus emphasising the circular connection between the narrative and royal succession.⁴⁵²

I intend to argue for a comparable understanding of the death of Enkidu in the *Epic*. Enkidu comes to embody the dying king in the narrative and the office of kingship is reborn in his 'successor', Gilgamesh. This requires a shift in narrative position for both characters, something that the subsequent argument will elucidate. This is undertaken so that the *Epic* may narrate normal succession within Mesopotamian kingship without the loss of its protagonist. It will become clear that at this point in the *Epic* we are undeniably being presented with an engagement with some of the complexities of succession and continuity detectable within Mesopotamian kingship. This would then represent a continuation of the themes of kingship, legitimisation, and power transfer that should be understood to span the entire narrative. It will also create a parallel for the narrative dynamic between Enkidu and Gilgamesh with that of Darius and Alexander at this point of transfer in their respective narrative traditions. This will provide a strong platform for the previously identified parallels between the two traditions, as both protagonists' mythical wanderings will clearly be seen to have been inspired by comparable events. It will also provide more sophisticated comparable motives for the expeditions and secure them in a much more natural contextualisation, the narratives of Mesopotamian

⁴⁵² *Inanna's Descent*, 347ff (Sladek 1974:146-152; 179-181).

royal succession. I will begin this analysis with the argument for understanding Enkidu as a king and a substitute.

5.2.1 Enkidu as a king and as a substitute

Enkidu's identification as a 'king' and as a 'substitute' encourages a joint treatment as both roles are naturally intertwined. Each reinforces the other ideologically, as well as within the overall narrative structure of the *Epic*. As the substitute, Enkidu is also the king. This is somewhat axiomatic, as one cannot substitute for another without assuming their role and at least some of their functionality. Each action as the substitute is performed because it is normally performed by the substituted or in an effort to be identified as a suitable replacement for them. Therefore, it is good practice to consider Enkidu as both the king and the substitute at each point in the narrative that either position is identified for his character. Any attempts to separate them, results in a dilution of the complexity and liminality present in the narrative presentation of Gilgamesh's companion in the *Epic*. Despite having asserted this, I will still attempt to keep the argument as separate as possible for clarity. Naturally, there will be occasions that require some overlap and the reference of one or the other in each demarcated section.

5.2.1.1 Enkidu as the substitute

One should begin by pointing out that this is not a completely novel understanding of the death of Enkidu. Mandell has already argued that the narrative function of Enkidu's death at this point in the *Epic* is to displace the need for the death of Gilgamesh. This enables our protagonist to keep on living and to fulfil his later wanderings. In this context, she understood Enkidu's death as not only one of narrative substitution or displacement, but as also akin to that of the substitute king albeit rather simplistically.⁴⁵³ Although I evidently agree with this assessment, it should be stressed from the outset that while this appears to be figuratively

⁴⁵³ Mandell 1996:127.

accurate, it is not a literal narration of the ritual being enacted. This is because it is not clear that we are dealing with a narrative encoding of a recognisable ritual action, as in Arrian, but instead as stated above Enkidu's substitution is more in-keeping with Dumuzi's for Inanna in *Inanna's Descent*, i.e. the narration of a supporting or related myth.⁴⁵⁴ Despite making the connection with the substitute king in passing, Mandell did not advance the discussion of the substitution in relation to its royal application, something that this study will correct. Her focus remained strictly upon how it changes the two characters and contributes to aspects of liminality in the *Epic*. However, in this episode the liminality of both characters is a symptom of the required narrative shift rather than simply part of any natural character development.

Mandell's useful treatment of the pair's liminality may be complemented by Van Nortwick's interpretation of their narrative dynamic. He understood the Enkidu of the *Epic* to represent a second self for Gilgamesh.⁴⁵⁵ This perceived doubling naturally enhances Enkidu's suitability as a substitute for Gilgamesh. When considered so, Enkidu is understood as being able to serve as a mirror for our protagonist, in which Gilgamesh can view, compare, and reform himself.⁴⁵⁶ Enkidu's suitability for this role and function is stressed in various ways in the *Epic*. An overt and rather simplistic example is how he is said to resemble Gilgamesh in appearance.⁴⁵⁷ It is clear that this was not a chance resemblance, but something realised through design by the gods.⁴⁵⁸ This visual manifestation of the pair's similarity or commonality not only emphasises their parity, but enforces the mirroring in quite literal terms. Their near equivalence is written across their common features, and such obvious similarities would only serve to emphasise to the audience Enkidu's suitability as a substitute for Gilgamesh when the occasion warranted it. It appears to amount to a case of narrative dressing for character

⁴⁵⁴ For the narrative presentation of the Substitute King Ritual shortly before the death of Alexander, see Arrian (*Anab.* vii.24.1-3; Smelik 1978-1979; cf. Plut. *Alex.* 73.3-74.1; Diod. xvii.116.2-4).

⁴⁵⁵ Van Northwick 1996:8-38; also see Keppler 1972:23-6; Dalley 1991:28-29.

⁴⁵⁶ See Dalley (1991) for a study of Enkidu's reformatory function concerning Gilgamesh and its legacy in Manichaeism; cf. *SB Epic*, i.93-98; 215-244 (George 2003:542-545; 550-553), which seem to support this functionality of Enkidu understood through equalling and rivalling Gilgamesh.

⁴⁵⁷ *SB Epic*, ii.38-43; cf. OB II.77-83; 179-188 (George 2003:174-175; 178-179; 560-561).

⁴⁵⁸ *SB Epic*, i.93-112 (George 2003:542-545).

function. Enkidu's costume may be considered complete when he is adopted by Gilgamesh's mother, Ninsun, making him our protagonist's brother and kin.⁴⁵⁹ This is without doubt the fulfilment of Ninsun's aforementioned intention to make Enkidu her son's equal.⁴⁶⁰

As a result of the considerable similarities between the pair, at the point of death Enkidu would have likely been understood in many ways to represent a dying Gilgamesh to all who encountered it. This would naturally also cause our protagonist to conflate his companion's fate with his own potential end. Both Mandell's and Van Northwick's studies evidently demonstrate an acute understanding of the interrelation between the two characters in the *Epic* and significantly contribute to our understanding of their complicated narrative dynamic. Van Northwick understood that Enkidu could serve as Gilgamesh in the narrative providing a flexibility of character that would prove useful when the time came to narrate the king's death. Mandell's discussion of liminality highlights the instability of the two main characters and her identification of the connection between the narrative displacement in this scene and royal substitution in Mesopotamian kingship represents a key contribution to the analysis. However, by failing to develop this connection further a significant aspect of the substitution's narrative function has remained unexplained. Both of the highlighted studies focus upon the interplay between the characters of Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the *Epic*. This is then contextualised against what it means to be the hero and a mortal figure. Neither seems to consider the relationship of both characters with the office of Mesopotamian kingship as a pertinent context.

Enkidu's displacement of Gilgamesh in Tablet VII does not occur in the *Epic* solely to spare our protagonist, nor was it simply to rid Gilgamesh of Enkidu for the next phase of the journey. These narrative concerns are of course present factors, but they fail to appreciate a further sophistication of the narrative displacement. I would go as far as to argue that it fails to address the substitution's main narrative

⁴⁵⁹ *SB Epic*, iii.120-128 (George 2003:580-581).

⁴⁶⁰ *SB Epic*, i.246-297 (George 2003:552-557).

function. Enkidu's death is not an historical event, but part of the narrative progression. Gilgamesh must embark upon his wanderings, but as we will see these are the wanderings of accession. They require the king to die to ignite them in the narrative. Enkidu serves this function and fulfils this role, but his death and funeral should not be understood simply as displacement or a catalyst, especially when you consider that two tablets of the *Epic* are reserved for its narration. It is a significant episode within the *Epic* in its own right, creating the narrative circumstances for detailing the death and funeral of the king. Put simply, the narrative substitution enables the author of the *Epic* to narrate the 'natural' death of the great king and the wanderings of accession without losing the narrative's main protagonist.⁴⁶¹

This ultimate function for Enkidu in the *Epic* is potentially referred to in what would amount to an example of narrative foresight. When Enkidu and Gilgamesh first encounter each other on the streets of Uruk in the *SB Epic*, Enkidu is seemingly referred to as a 'substitute' for Gilgamesh,

ki-i šèr-ri la-'i ú-n[a-áš-šá-qu šēpī(g)ir]^{min}-šu]
ul-la-nu-um-ma eṭ-lu ba-ni(-)[. . .]x [(x)]
a-na ^diš-ḫa-ra ma-a-a-al [x x] ti [x]
a-na ^dGIŠ-gim-maš ki-ma ili(dingir) šá-ki-i[š-š]ú pu-ḫ[u?]

They were [kissing his (Enkidu) feet] like a little baby's;⁴⁶²
 already the man . . . [. . .] . . .
 For Išhara a bed of [. . .] . . .
 for Gilgamesh, like a god, a substitute was in place.
 (*SB Epic*, ii.107-110)⁴⁶³

Compare this with the comparable line in the *OB Epic*,

a-na ^dGIŠ ki-ma i-li-im ša-ki-iš-šum me-eḫ-rum for Gilgamesh, like a god, a rival was appointed
 (OB II.194)⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶¹ Sumerian and Akkadian distinguishes between two kinds of death, natural and violent (Lambert 1980:65; Katz 2015:68). As 'natural' death is understood differently in a modern context, I will continue to use 'scare-quotes' to highlight the broad definition at use in this discussion, which is in-keeping with Mesopotamian usage.

⁴⁶² Cf. Worthington (2012:303-304), who plausibly suggests that *šerru la'û* 'small child' (for George, 'little baby') in the two extant manuscripts may be a corruption of the more reconcilable and phonetically similar (yet unattested) *šarru le'û* 'powerful king'.

⁴⁶³ George 2003:562-563.

⁴⁶⁴ George 2003:178-179.

George has argued that *pūhu* 'substitute' represents a corruption in the *SB Epic* of the original sense of the line evident from the *OB* parallel. He understood this 'corruption' as the work of a Middle Babylonian editor who misunderstood an obsolete wedding custom and so substituted *pūhu* for *meḥrum* evoking an association with the *šar pūhi* 'substitute king'. According to George, the line no longer fits the passage and the substitution for *pūhu* has created a statement that lacks any sense or meaning.⁴⁶⁵ Although possible, George's interpretation does not explain why the editor would insert a reference to *šar pūhi* at this point in the *Epic*. If the festival context of *meḥrum* was misunderstood it could simply be left alone, especially as a 'rival' even in a general sense clearly fits the context of the scene without any need for a deeper understanding by an editor. The change itself implies a sense of interpretation, even in George's assessment. Therefore, I would like to consider an alternative interpretation of this line that maintains a certain continuity of understanding and meaning between the *OB* and *SB Epics*.

It is possible to reconcile *meḥrum* and *pūhu* as both may be understood to refer to comparable functions for Enkidu's character in the *Epic*. George translated *meḥrum* as 'rival' arguing that it fit the context well, but the extended translations of *meḥrum* such as 'equal', 'counterpart', or 'replica' may be equally suitable in the context and also serve to underlie a more omniscient introduction to the new narrative dynamic being created by the first meeting of our protagonist and his companion.⁴⁶⁶ As Mandell argued, the first encounter between Gilgamesh and Enkidu significantly changes both characters and ultimately brings them closer together.⁴⁶⁷ It may be that Enkidu is being referred to in the narrative using a term that not only addresses his current role and action, but also refers to his overall contribution, i.e. to the narrative progression, to the develop of our protagonist, as well as to his ultimate function as a substitute. In one word (*meḥrum*) Enkidu is re-introduced to the audience with his full functionality: to rival, equal, represent, and ultimately replace Gilgamesh in death. Thus, the *Epic* demonstrates the

⁴⁶⁵ George 2003:456.

⁴⁶⁶ CAD x.2.54-60.

⁴⁶⁷ Mandell 1996:126.

quintessential omniscience of the narrator, preparing the audience for what will follow and referring to the plausibly well-known functionality of the figure of Enkidu at the moment of the narrative birth of the dynamic.

If this wider interpretation of '*meḥrum*' is accepted, then instead of understanding the utilisation of *pūḥu*, 'substitute' or 'replacement', in place of *meḥrum* as a misunderstanding and corruption, we can consider that the relevant editor had an acute understanding of Enkidu's function in the *Epic*, as well as a sophisticated understanding of the use of *meḥrum* in the comparable OB line.⁴⁶⁸ The editor understood the wider application of *meḥrum* and its employment as an all encompassing introduction to the new narrative dynamic being created by the pair's first meeting. Thus, the evoking of the *šar pūḥi*, that George understood to be behind the utilisation of *pūḥu* in the *SB Epic*, is understood as deliberate, presenting Enkidu from the outset as an equal, a second king, and ultimately, a perfect substitute. This reading of *meḥrum*, *pūḥu*, and the scene lends supports to Worthington's theory that *šerru la'û* in line 107 constitutes a variant of the more reconcilable *šarru le'û*.⁴⁶⁹ Although the reverse cannot be said, as while it remains unattested in any extant manuscript it cannot securely substantiate what I have argued, it is still worth noting. If any subsequently discovered fragments validate Worthington's suggestion then the entire scene would undeniably and unavoidably cause the reader to envision Enkidu the substitute, and Enkidu the king.

Even the reason given for Enkidu's sudden change of fate and death supports the reading of his death as an example of royal substitution, whilst reinforcing the understanding that it is the death of the king. The opening lines of *SB Epic*, Tablet VII are yet to be recovered and so we cannot be completely confident about the reasons why Enkidu is doomed to death in this version of the narrative. However, others have utilised a Hittite paraphrase to fill the gap in want of a better source and this seems to be quite profitable.⁴⁷⁰ In this paraphrase, Anu demands that as a

⁴⁶⁸ CAD xii.496-501.

⁴⁶⁹ Worthington 2012:303-304.

⁴⁷⁰ Van Northwick 1996:25; George 1999:54-55; 2003:478.

consequence of the slaying of the Bull of Heaven and Huwawa, one of the two (Gilgamesh or Enkidu) must die. Enlil decrees that Gilgamesh must live on and so Enkidu is faced with death.⁴⁷¹ Although this Hittite narrative must be utilised with caution, it appears to fill the narrative gap well. We know that Enkidu's fate is revealed to him in a dream in the *SB Epic* and that the dream narrates an assembly of the gods.⁴⁷² We are also presented with an Enkidu in the *Epic* who demonstrates in his lament anger towards Enlil and favour towards Shamash. This makes sense in relation to Shamash's presented objection in the Hittite paraphrase to Enlil's decree of death for Enkidu.⁴⁷³ It is also clear from the paraphrase that the pairs' impiety has brought about the divine ire and the requirement of a death. In the divine assembly Enkidu's and Gilgamesh's respective lives and deaths are held in the balance by the gods and considered with a degree of equivalence, establishing an undeniable mutual identification between the two characters. This is a pertinent detail. Enkidu cannot be considered a functionary or secondary at this point, but instead occupies a position of pseudo-parity with our protagonist (it is short of full parity as it is contradictory and appears to be more securely functional in the narrative).

That Enkidu is allotted the fate and the consequences of the king's actions makes the comparison with royal substitution and the Substitute King Ritual obvious. Firstly, Enkidu's death is acceptable to the gods as payment for the transgressions of Gilgamesh. Secondly, Enkidu's death enables the king, Gilgamesh, to escape the fatal consequences of his actions.⁴⁷⁴ One may object to this interpretation and claim that Enkidu's fate is a result of his own actions and not Gilgamesh's, but this seems to miss how their lives are held in the balance in the narrative. Further, at no point are we presented with a whitewashing of Gilgamesh or a vilification of Enkidu. Any attempt to render such a judgement would currently amount to an example of eisegesis of the narrative. The impiety remains the pair's and so surely Gilgamesh

⁴⁷¹ Stefanini 1969; Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:162-163; cf. fragment f of MB Bog₁ (George 2003:314-317).

⁴⁷² *SB Epic*, vi.181-vii.1 (George 2003:630-631).

⁴⁷³ *SB Epic*, vii.28-63 (George 2003:634-637); *Hittite paraphrase*, Tablet III (Stefanini 1969; George 1999:55; Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:163).

⁴⁷⁴ Cf. Lambert 1957-58.

should take the ultimate responsibility. As king, the consequences for straying from the divine will should be our protagonist's, but he is spared by Enlil's decree and a substitute is taken instead. Enkidu is without doubt complicit in the impiety of Gilgamesh's administration, but perhaps no more responsible as a secondary figure than a prisoner who becomes the substitute king for a Mesopotamian monarch. The conceptualisation of the substitute in this way might be ideologically why such figures were considered suitable options for the role of a substitute king beyond their obvious social expendability. They could conceptually be seen to embody the impiety in the state, which had caused the divine alienation, the ill omens, and royal death sentence.⁴⁷⁵

On the other hand, one need not relegate Enkidu to a position of mere substitute king. That he shares equally the guilt and impiety with Gilgamesh simply further enhances his suitability to serve as a wholesale replacement for him and occupy the role of great king in the narrative. He has campaigned and strayed along the same path as the king. His actions are the king's actions and so may be the consequences. Their experiences and actions in unison cement the ability for one to be identified as the other, serve as the other, or die as the other. Enkidu fits easily into Gilgamesh's narrative position as his own character has in many ways mirrored it. This sophisticated melding and interchange between the two characters creates a readily available narrative vehicle in the Enkidu of the *Epic*, through which the 'natural' death of the great king and 'normal dynastic succession' can be articulated. Gilgamesh as a result of this narrative shift for Enkidu becomes a somewhat liminal character himself. He is displaced from his conventional position as king, and recently acquired position as the great king, taking up the position of 'son' and successor. This will be expanded upon below.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. Parpola 1983b:xxii-xxxii; also, the substitute king alluded to in the Alexander narratives is universally stated to be a prisoner (Arrian, *Anab.* vii.24.2; Plut. *Alex.* 73.4; Diod. xvii.116.2).

5.2.1.2 Enkidu as the king

As predicted, there was a considerable amount of overlap between Enkidu's identification as a king and as a substitute during the argument for the latter. The lines will continue to be blurred as the case for identifying Enkidu as a king is naturally enhanced by mirroring the circumstances of his death and funeral with that of his protagonist model. George has already argued that the narrative detailing Enkidu's death and funeral conspicuously resembles Gilgamesh's own death and funeral in the Sumerian poem, *The Death of Bilgames*.⁴⁷⁶ George highlights the comparable dream that both Bilgames and Enkidu receive to announce their impending doom, and the presentation of gifts to curry favour with the chthonic gods (or gods in their chthonic context). He also highlights comparable visions of political and social elites in the netherworld, such as shades of different classes of priests. This led George to conclude that there is an evident shared literary pattern between the Sumerian poem, *The Death of Bilgames*, and Enkidu's death and funeral in *SB Epic VII-VIII*.⁴⁷⁷

I contend that this should not be understood as an *ad hoc* utilisation of death narrative taken from elsewhere within the Gilgamesh tradition, but that instead the similarities are better explained through the understanding that both figures represent, at their respective points, the dying and subsequently dead Mesopotamian monarch. These similarities should be viewed as an example of intentionalism and a further act of deliberate parallelism. The repetition of details and scene emphasises that Enkidu is undergoing royal death and dying as a king would die, just as King Gilgamesh will die. This reinforces the understanding of substitution and Enkidu's newfound royal position at this point in the *Epic*. It appears inescapable that the audience is expected at this point to understand that Enkidu has assumed the narrative position previously occupied by Gilgamesh and

⁴⁷⁶ For the death and funeral of Enkidu, see *SB Epic VII-VIII* (George 2003:634-665; Jimenez 2014:101-102); cf. MB Ur; fragment f of MB Bog₁; MB Megiddo (George 2003:296-301; 314-317; 342-345); *Letter of Gilgamesh* (Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:167-168); for the Sumerian poem, *The Death of Bilgames*, see Kramer 1944a; George 1999:195-208; Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000; Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:143-154; Veldhuis 2001.

⁴⁷⁷ George 2003:19; 482-483; George 1999:197; Foster, Frayne and Beckman 2001:143.

should now be considered to embody the great king himself. This is pressed upon the viewer through the similarity of scene and the expected recognition of it. That it is the detailing and trappings of the death and funeral that bear the similarities rather than the circumstances further supports the understanding that it is the kingly status that is being emulated and paralleled rather than the individual's fate that is being recycled. Enkidu has become the dying king.

One could restrict the case for Enkidu's royal death to the above argument for substitution. Even the narrative substitution or doubling argued by Mandell and Van Northwick present us with the conceptual circumstances suitable for understanding Enkidu's death as that of the king. The similarities identified by George between the death of Bilgames and the death of Enkidu within the Gilgamesh tradition make the mirroring and emulation difficult to argue against. Gilgamesh is undeniably the king, if Enkidu's death is in any way a mirroring or displacement of Gilgamesh's death, then it is the death of a king. However, I am arguing that it is clearly the royal death that is being supplanted rather than simply the personal, and that this is significant for the plot development of the narrative, so it is worth stressing the point. In what follows, I will present further aspects of the episode that clearly present Enkidu in royal terms at the time of his death, making the case for this particular kind of narrative shift unassailable. This will be achieved by revisiting the details of his funerary rites, as well as addressing the ideology of his 'illness' and death. I will argue that this sort of royal death scene should be understood as an institutionalised narrative structure in Mesopotamian kingship tradition down to the time of Alexander. Finally, I will demonstrate that Enkidu was not only recognised by others as the king at the point of his death, but that he also understood himself in these terms towards the end.

5.2.1.2.1 The funerary rites of Enkidu the king

As stated, I will continue the case for Enkidu the king by first expanding upon the pre-existing analysis of his funeral in the *Epic*. George has demonstrated at length that Enkidu's funeral is unmistakeably similar to the funeral of the great king in

Mesopotamia: the lying in state of the dead king on a bed of honour; the creation of a cult statue; the lavish and extensive grave goods that are presented as gifts for the chthonic gods; and the symbolic mourning of the civic and natural worlds, make it clear that this is the funeral of the Mesopotamian monarch.⁴⁷⁸ George's detailed analysis enables a considerable amount of brevity and precision on my part. I simply intend to make a couple of additional points that help support the royal recognition in the ritual practice of Enkidu's funeral, and otherwise direct the reader to George's study. In many ways, George's analysis is enough to make the point. It is just a matter of what conclusion you reach. The identified parallels with royal funerary rites mean that one may understand and could have understood the scene of Enkidu's funeral as that of the king's. Although a certain amount of imitation in grandeur of royal funerals would be expected in the funerals of high ranking socials and confederates of the king, these extravagant details are much more securely identifiable as trappings of the king's funeral. It is also clear that they are being presented in this way in the *Epic*. Consider how it is said that the princes of the earth will come and kiss the feet of the dead Enkidu when he is laid out upon his bed of honour,

[*uš-na-al-ka-a-ma ina ma-a-a-li rabī*]
ina ma-a-a-a[*l tak-ni-i uš-na-al-ka-ma*]
ú-šeš-šeb-ka [*šub-ta né-eḫ-ta šu-bat šu-me-li*]
ma-al-ku šá qa-q-a-r[*i ú-na-áš-šá-qu šēpī^{min}-ka*]

'[I shall lay you out on a great bed,]
 on a bed [of honour I shall lay you out.]
 I shall set you [on a restful seat, the seat to (my) left,]
 the princes of the earth [will kiss your feet.]
 (SB *Epic*, viii.84-87)⁴⁷⁹

The significance of the dead figure and his socio-political superiority is evident through this act of homage. This would undoubtedly have represented a royal privilege. It is the final act of duty to the dead king by subordinate monarchs, and

⁴⁷⁸ George 2003:484-490. For Enkidu's funeral, see *SB Epic*, Tablet VIII (George 2003:650-665); specifically, for the lavish funeral preparations, viii.65-230; Enkidu lying in state like a king, viii.84-87; the funerary/cultic statue of Enkidu, viii.67-72 (also the subject of the *Letter of Gilgamesh*; Foster, Frayne & Beckman 2001:167-168; George 2003:117-119); the expression of mourning in the natural and civic worlds, viii.7-41; cf. McGinnis 1987; Cohen 2005; and Katz 2007.

⁴⁷⁹ George 2003:656-657.

significantly reaffirms one's loyalty to the dynasty. This is because during these funerary proceedings the king's successor would have occupied a prominent position, making the gesture of kissing the dead king's feet just as much about honouring the new king as the one recently passed.⁴⁸⁰ Although one may argue that a grief-stricken king might extend such privilege to a companion who was not strictly entitled to it, that it was foretold and so seemingly approved of by Shamash implies that Enkidu was due such honour.⁴⁸¹ The entire scene evokes the image of Enkidu the dead king. It also begins to position Gilgamesh in the role of 'son' and successor. It is important to understand that this would have been a familiar tableau to any Mesopotamian audience, due to the occasional death of actual real-life monarchs and the annual royal ancestor cult of Dumuzi.⁴⁸²

George has argued for a further detail in *Epic* concerning Enkidu's funerary rites that ideologically appears to emphasise Enkidu's position as a dying monarch rather than just a dying companion. This is the identification of a three-day period before the interment of Enkidu in *SB Epic*, Tablet VIII. George's assessment is largely predicated on the repetition of *mimmû šēri ina namāri* 'at the very first light of dawn' at lines 65, 92, and 213. He argues that even in its fragmentary state Tablet VIII does not seem to allow for a further three to four repetitions of this narrative device. George resultantly concludes that Enkidu is interred after the third day in the *Epic*, and that one should understand the six days and seven nights before which Gilgamesh allowed Enkidu to be buried attested elsewhere in the *Epic* as formulaic and so an exaggerated poetic expression of grief.⁴⁸³ I find this both plausible and sensible, and significantly it fits well with other narratives of royal death from Mesopotamia. For example, this three-day period is evident in the funerary rituals of the Ur III period kings as reconstructed by Katz. A rough and

⁴⁸⁰ See how the bed of honour is set out on the left of Gilgamesh, *SB Epic*, vii.141-142 (George 2003:640-641). Also see Cohen (2005:19) who highlights the social and political stakes surrounding the funeral of the king and succession.

⁴⁸¹ *SB Epic*, vii.132-147 (George 2003:640-643).

⁴⁸² For the annual cult of Dumuzi, see Shurlock 1992; 2013; Fritz 2003:89; 231; 240-242; 265-272; 365-368. This cult entailed the laying out of the archetypal king Dumuzi on a bed of honour along with the enactment of royal funerary rites. For an account of the preparations for the funeral of a Neo-Assyrian monarch (likely Esarhaddon), see McGinnis 1987; cf. George 2003:487.

⁴⁸³ George 2003:486-487; 656-665.

somewhat redacted summary of the three days that Katz outlined is as follows: various preparations are carried out and offerings are made to the gods; the soul/spirit of the deceased king is conceptually considered as trapped in the body until the ritual act of the third night; 'scapegoat' animal sacrifice is offered during this third night apparently in an effort to absolve the king of his sins; and finally, with preparations complete, the king's body is interred the following day (the fourth day).⁴⁸⁴

This three day, pre-burial, funerary period is also found in Sumerian literary accounts of royal deaths and funerary rites. In *The Death of Ur-Namma* (hereafter referred to as *Urnamma A*) it is stated that after seven days in the netherworld, ten days had passed.⁴⁸⁵ Logically, this refers to the three days of funerary rites for Ur-Namma after he had died, but before he was interred and able to depart for the netherworld. These would then be the three days when, as Katz outlined, Ur-Namma was practically dead, but during which his spirit was still bound to his mortal body. Conspicuously, three days are also said to pass during which the dead king/queen Inanna is trapped in the netherworld in *Inanna's Descent*.⁴⁸⁶ On the third day after Inanna's 'death', her minister (Ninshubura) carries out what can clearly be seen to be mourning rituals. These are acted out just as Inanna had instructed her to do so in advance.⁴⁸⁷ Inanna is conceptually dead whilst upon her hook in the netherworld and so funerary rituals would have been expected. Inanna's death, representative of the king's, demands an expression of grief in-keeping with her socio-political status, and the narrative provides this across an expanse of locations during Inanna's ascent from the netherworld. Note that it is Dumuzi's apparent lack of grief or any noticeable display of mourning that causes Inanna's ire and the king's subsequent damning to his eternal cycle.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁴ Katz 2007:177-180; cf. more generally, Cohen 2005.

⁴⁸⁵ *Urnamma A*, 145 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:126; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:60); cf. *Susa version*, 115, where it is stated that after five days, ten had passed (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:160-161); note that *Urnamma A* refers to the Nippur tablets here and that the Susa recension will be referred to separately and in comparison where relevant.

⁴⁸⁶ *Inanna's Descent*, 167-175 (Sladek 1974:123-125; 165-166). Note that the Ur texts M and P have much longer periods of stay in the netherworld for Inanna (Sladek 1974:204).

⁴⁸⁷ *Inanna's Descent*, 26-72; 173-216 (Sladek 1974:106-112; 155-158; 124-130; 166-169; 187-190).

⁴⁸⁸ *Inanna's Descent*, 284-412 (Sladek 1974:138-152; 175-181).

This imagery and scenery accompanying the narration of Inanna's own journey in *Inanna's Descent* makes it hard to deny that the three-day period in which she is absent from her minister represents a clear analogy of the initial rituals and reactions to the king's death in Mesopotamia. It is of course not surprising that it aligns with Neo-Sumerian royal funerary structure presented by Katz. *Inanna's Descent* is engaging with the death of a king and being contextualised in it. Something that helps emphasise the royal significance of this prescribed three-day period is that it was not universal in Mesopotamia death, and seems to have specifically served an ideological purpose in the funerary rituals of the king.⁴⁸⁹ It is not then unexpected that it is also specifically three days for which Dumuzi conceptually lies-in-state during the annual festival of Dumuzi.⁴⁹⁰ Thus, the apparent repetition of these three days in the funerary rites of Enkidu secures his elevated socio-political status in ritual action. It seems evident that the structure and narration of Enkidu's funeral mirrored not only that of Gilgamesh, but more accurately that of the Mesopotamian monarch from as early as the Ur III period onwards.

5.2.1.2.2 The ideology of illness and death for the Mesopotamian monarch

It is difficult not to connect such narrative circumstances concerning royal death with the Sumerian narrative, *Lugalbanda and the Mountain Cave* (hereafter referred to as *Lugalbanda I*).⁴⁹¹ Alster has argued that this narrative, as we have it, can be more securely dated to the Isin-Larsa period. This is because in his assessment the Ur III period fragments appear to represent 'forerunners' of the text rather than parallel earlier versions.⁴⁹² I am not as confident as Alster in his dating of *Lugalbanda I*, but one cannot determine the matter on the basis of the currently extant material. Significantly, this positions the Lugalbanda narrative in the same

⁴⁸⁹ Katz 2007:180.

⁴⁹⁰ Scurlock 1992:58ff.

⁴⁹¹ *Lugalbanda I* (Vanstiphout 2003:99-131; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:11-22).

⁴⁹² Alster 2005:61; Michalowski 2010:13-17.

literary environment as the Sumerian *Death of Bilgames* poem.⁴⁹³ Both narratives can be located in the Ur III period and both narratives remain in circulation around the time that the *OB Epic of Gilgamesh* is evident.⁴⁹⁴ It then seems reasonable that both narrative traditions would have: engaged with comparable ideologies concerning royal death as found in the Ur III period; been part of what helped transmit this ideology through the Isin-Larsa period; and that this ideology concerning the death of the king may then have been maintained within the *Epic of Gilgamesh* through the narration of Enkidu's death.⁴⁹⁵ Effectively, we have a visible and viable narrative avenue for the transmission and the continuity of ideology that carries us into the First Millennium BCE. Further, the association between Gilgamesh and Lugalbanda within the former's narrative tradition makes a connection tangible.⁴⁹⁶ With this established, the relevance of the *Lugalbanda I* to royal death in Mesopotamia and the traditions of royal death in the Gilgamesh tradition can be elucidated.

In *Lugalbanda I*, Lugalbanda becomes ill in the mountains during a campaign. His illness is so extreme that he becomes incapacitated. His comrades lay him out on a bed in a mountain cave and leave various things around the bed for Lugalbanda's benefit. They then depart leaving their companion upon what may be his funerary bed. They state that they will return on their way back to the city to either re-unite with their healed friend or to bear his dead body home. After a period of three days Lugalbanda eventually recovers due to divine intervention and emerges from the cave.⁴⁹⁷

It should be noted here that Lugalbanda's illness is not a conventional illness that may affect the king from time to time. That a king is even allowed to become ill

⁴⁹³ George 2003:7.

⁴⁹⁴ George 2003:17-24.

⁴⁹⁵ Enkidu's death and funeral is not currently evident in any known manuscript before the MB period (referenced above), but OB VA+BM strongly suggests that it was part of the *Epic* in its OB format (George 2003:272-286).

⁴⁹⁶ For examples, see OB Nippur, obv.7-8 and *SB Epic*, i.35 (George 2003:242-243; 540-541).

⁴⁹⁷ *Lugalbanda I* (Wilcke 1969; Hallo 1983; Vanstiphout 2003:99-131; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:11-22). Kramer (1946:123-124), Alster (1974:180), and Michalowski (2010:13-15) also provide useful summaries of the narrative.

would of course have been ideologically difficult, representing a bad omen concerning his divine patronage. However, this would have without doubt occurred on occasion in reality. For example, see Assurnasirpal I's prayer to Ishtar asking for deliverance from his illness, an illness that he claims is due to divine agency and an inexplicable displeasure with him.⁴⁹⁸ It seems clear from both examples that one may escape the circumstances of illness by beseeching the gods, but there is a key difference. Lugalbanda's illness in contrast to Assurnasirpal's clearly mirrors death in appearance and is treated as an analogy of death by his companions.⁴⁹⁹ Therefore, it is not only an example of royal illness in Mesopotamian literature, but it is also useful in the analysis of the ideology of royal death in Mesopotamia.⁵⁰⁰

Lugalbanda is laid out on a bed in the cave and it is adorned with an array of items that serve to benefit a risen Lugalbanda, but may equally serve as funerary offerings should he perish.⁵⁰¹ His comrades' intention to return to either greet a recovered Lugalbanda, or bear their departed comrade back to the city supports the identification of this scene with the laying out of the title figure on a funerary bed.⁵⁰² When they depart Lugalbanda is said to be motionless and appears to not even be breathing.⁵⁰³ For all intents and purposes he may be considered dead, at least in appearance. His 'illness' then lasts for a further three days during which the gods are beseeched, divine aid is given, and recovery is realised (note this is all on the third day).⁵⁰⁴ An incapacitated and apparently breathless Lugalbanda may be considered for all intents and purposes dead at the point of his comrades' departure, but at the same time Lugalbanda is considered to still be alive in the

⁴⁹⁸ *On occasion of illness* (Foster 2005:327-330).

⁴⁹⁹ Michalowski 2010:14-15; cf. Alster (1974:180n.9), who states that the journey to the netherworld is alluded to in the narration of Lugalbanda's time alone and incapacitated in the cave.

⁵⁰⁰ Any attempt to resist this utility on the grounds that Lugalbanda is not yet king applies strictures upon his narrative character that the text does not. For example, see *Lugalbanda I*, 327, where he is referred to as king upon leaving the cave (Vanstiphout 2003:122-123; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:19; 22).

⁵⁰¹ Vanstiphout 2003:102; cf. Michalowski (2010:15) who understands the cave as a potential tomb.

⁵⁰² *Lugalbanda I*, 86-140 (Vanstiphout 2003:108-113; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:14-15).

⁵⁰³ *Lugalbanda I*, 116-120 (Vanstiphout 2003:110-111; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:14).

⁵⁰⁴ *Lugalbanda I*, 141-264 (Vanstiphout 2003:112-119; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:15-17).

narrative, just in a state of mortal peril. Therefore, during these three days he is both alive and dead. Only at the end of the three days will it be determined whether he is actually still alive or is proven to be dead. I argue that this represents a liminal state at the point of death for the king. When he appears to all to be dead, a period of three days will determine the matter. This reconciles well with the apparent three days before the dead king is interred in Mesopotamian royal tradition that I have discussed above.

With the spirit ideologically still in the dead king's body during these three days, the king's life and essence may be considered to linger. It is conceptually still possible for the gods to act and reverse the action, hence the three days of funerary rituals and the three days of apparent death for Lugalbanda in the cave. That which Katz interpreted as a sin-absolving scapegoat on the third day of the Neo-Sumerian king's funerary rituals may also plausibly be understood as a final offering in exchange to the gods. The animal sacrifice is offered as a surrogate for the human subject of the ritual. Instead of simply absolving sins, the animals act as vessels for the fate that has befallen the king. This would enable the illness to depart for the netherworld without taking its original host, the king, should the gods will it. Scurlock highlights such usage of animal surrogates in a royal ritual context in Mesopotamia in her analysis of K 164 concerning the cult of Dumuzi (an annual cult associated with the dead king).⁵⁰⁵ *Lugalbanda I* is then seen to engage with the narration of the initial three days after the king's death. The gods accept Lugalbanda's pleas and restore him to health. Thus, when the king enters into a fatal illness, or appears to have died, attempts are ritually and ideologically made to appease the gods. If successful one may recover as Lugalbanda does, if unsuccessful death in appearance becomes death proven.⁵⁰⁶

This liminality allows for a further sophistication of the Lugalbanda narrative. Not only may he be understood as both ill and dead during the three days in the cave,

⁵⁰⁵ Scurlock 1992:56n.18; cf. Scurlock 2006; Lundstrom 2012:276-277.

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. *Urnamma A*, 52-54, where it is stated that the dying king's sacrifices were no longer accepted by the gods (Kramer 1967:113-118; Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:110-111; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:58); cf. *Susa version*, 33-34 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:156-157).

but he can also be understood to both recover and die. Although it is more overtly recovery that is narrated, the subtleties of the narrative allow the alternative to be maintained. Lugalbanda has the appearance of death during the three days in the cave, incapacitated and breathless. His ability to suddenly beseech the gods on the evening of the third day as the cool of the evening acted like a balm may be partly considered extracorporeal or a result of poetic licence brought about by narrative necessity. During his beseeching of the gods as the evening of third day progresses to the morning of the fourth day, Lugalbanda is presented falling in a sleep and rising in the morning reinvigorated.⁵⁰⁷ One could consider this as an analogy of death and rebirth.⁵⁰⁸ Lugalbanda's solar association is apparent throughout these passages. That Lugalbanda is said to fall into a slumber like the sun and his morning renewal is closely associated with the sun's own daily renewal makes the symbolism difficult to deny.⁵⁰⁹ The dying Mesopotamian monarch was associated with the setting sun, whilst the new king naturally draws comparisons with the rising sun.⁵¹⁰ Finally, upon leaving the cave Lugalbanda is presented with the plant of life and water of life to complete his restoration.⁵¹¹ Suddenly, a reading akin to that argued for *Inanna's Descent* becomes apparent. In both narratives, the renewal of the office of kingship through succession is understood, narrated through the single literary characters of Inanna and Lugalbanda respectively.

Therefore, it appears clear that *Lugalbanda I* exhibits the compression of extreme illness and death into the one event for the Mesopotamian monarch. Von Soden's and Scurlock's identification of a ritual on tablet K 164 that attempts to cure the king's son (the object of the ritual is certainly a male royal personage) from illness provides us with a First Millennium BCE example of the continuity of this analogy in

⁵⁰⁷ *Lugalbanda I*, 141-264 (Vanstiphout 2003:112-119; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:15-17).

⁵⁰⁸ Cf. *SB Epic*, xi.209-246 (George 2003:716-719), where sleep's literary association with death is used to demonstrate the futility of Gilgamesh's quest for immortality.

⁵⁰⁹ *Lugalbanda I*, 143-172; 197-198; 226-264 (Vanstiphout 2003:112-119; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:15-17).

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Charpin 2013; Frahm 2013.

⁵¹¹ *Lugalbanda I*, 264-270 (Vanstiphout 2003:118-119; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:17); cf. *Inanna's Descent*, 279-281 (Sladek 1974:137-138; 174; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:73).

Mesopotamian kingship.⁵¹² Scurlock has argued that this ritual attempted to utilise the annual cult of Dumuzi to release a king or future king from extreme illness. This connection between the annual cult of Dumuzi and the relief from illness for the living is not isolated to this example.⁵¹³ During the festival, Dumuzi is conceptually released from the netherworld and then laid out in a re-enactment of his mourning rites over a period of three days. In the case of K 164 the stricken is laid out on a bed of honour just as Dumuzi is conceptually honoured during the festival. Ishtar is then beseeched and may relieve the stricken from his illness banishing the affliction to the netherworld with the departing Dumuzi, and thus sparing the afflicted.⁵¹⁴ This literally mirrors the funerary rites of the Mesopotamian monarch and Lugalbanda's three days of illness/death in the mountain cave. Further, this identification of a ritual of this nature on the K 164 and its connection with the cult of Dumuzi not only establishes continuity of the Mesopotamian analogy, but also clearly demonstrates that death and illness could be synonymous in a ritual as well as a literary context.

Thus, *Lugalbanda I* informs our understanding of the ideology concerning the death and illness of the king in Mesopotamia. From the Lugalbanda example it appears clear that if the king is sick to the point of incapacitation and with the appearance of death, ritual actions very similar to the initial funerary rites can be enacted. Then divine aid and deliverance would be realised in three days, if it was to come at all. Beyond this proscribed three-day period all hope is lost. However, this ambiguity articulated in *Lugalbanda I* and utilised in K 164 creates a complication, as when death may simply be illness, so illness may represent the first signs of death. The latter half of this correlation is more reconcilable with the reality of illness' relation to death, but I do not mean it in such simplistic terms. What I mean is that the final illness of a king may be narrated in terms that mirror the three liminal days after death. An illness with death's appearance is presented in the narrative. It appears to be a natural connection and the analogy is supported in a Mesopotamian context

⁵¹² Von Soden 1939:55-56; Scurlock 1992.

⁵¹³ Parpola 1970:4-5; 1983b:8-10; Scurlock 1992:60.

⁵¹⁴ Scurlock 1992.

by the conceptualisation of illness in *Lugalbanda I*, K 164, as well as with its general connection with the annual cult of Dumuzi. Therefore, we are not solely dealing with the ideology concerning the initial days after the king's death, but also the ideology concerning the fatal illness of the Mesopotamian monarch.

5.2.1.2.3 An institutionalised narrative structure for the 'natural' death of the king in Mesopotamia

One must then consider the relationship between illness and death in narratives detailing the demise of other Mesopotamian monarchs. The deaths of Gilgamesh and Enkidu are instructive in this case. Both Gilgamesh and Enkidu are presented as lying largely incapacitated by illness and appear to expire after a number of days of becoming progressively weaker. The passages detailing both deaths are currently fragmentary and so the exact extent of any possible parallel cannot be assessed with any degree of certainty. On the current material, we can only be sure that Gilgamesh was ill for six days, whereas Enkidu's death extends over at least twelve.⁵¹⁵ There is an obvious difficulty in reconciling twelve, six, and three days that is not immediately resolvable. A resolution may not actually be necessary, as one may be being a little too pedantic to demand uniformity in this detail. If the missing sections of Gilgamesh's and Enkidu's deaths are recovered the matter may become clearer.

One solution that may be offered in line the current material is that twelve and six are both multiples of three, and so we may be dealing with an extrapolation of the prescribed three-day period in Mesopotamian narratives of royal death and illness discussed above.⁵¹⁶ That which is compressed in the example of *Lugalbanda I* into three days (the narration of both death and illness) may be stretched out when

⁵¹⁵ *The Death of Bilgames*, N₂ 1-14 (George 1999:197-198; Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000:14-15); *Enkidu's death*, *SB Epic*, vii.254-267 (George 2003:646-647).

⁵¹⁶ I owe this observation regarding the significance of them being multiples of three to Dr. Ellie Mackin.

narrating the 'natural' death of the Mesopotamian monarch.⁵¹⁷ Note that I have already argued that Enkidu's funeral contains parallels to the three days in the cave, so the illness may be considered an extension and an extrapolation. That the three days appear to multiply outwards in the illnesses of Gilgamesh and Enkidu may be conspicuous and potentially indicates a structure for narrating the final illness of the king connected the three days of liminality at his death (although I would not be so arbitrary as to demand that the duration of the illness must be divisible by three to accept the repetition of the model).

This would then represent a sort of institutionalised narrative structure in Mesopotamian kingship tradition for narrating the king's 'natural' death, where the final illness is conceptualised as an extrapolation of eventual mortuary state. A simple outline would be that as the king enters his final illness he declines over a number of days eventually becoming incapacitated and appearing bereft of signs of life. The king would then enter his prescribed three liminal days as his funerary rites are initiated, being interred after the third day. He would then embark upon his journey into the netherworld where he will be recognised as a king in the chthonic court (this final part will be discussed further below). It is of course possible for a king to actually die in the manner described above, but it is the recycling or repetition of such parallel scenes in the narratives of multiple archetypal kings of Mesopotamia that more sensibly indicates that we are dealing with a narrative for how a king should die a 'natural' death in Mesopotamia. The use of an institutionalised narrative structure not only draws deliberate parallels between the great kings of Mesopotamia in their final moments, but also reinforces the ideological strictures around the death of the Mesopotamian monarch in a context of continuity. Just as the royal funeral exhibits common details in its ritualistic and literary enactment, the protracted illness of the king is repeated, mirroring the liminality of death integral to the funerary rites. What is found compressed in *Lugalbanda I* is stretched out into illness and death in other contemporary

⁵¹⁷ It is worth noting here that *Lugalbanda* is ill before he enters his three days laid out in the cave, see *Lugalbanda I*, 75-140 (Vanstiphout 2003:108-113).

narratives. This would securely place the divinely driven action of royal death and succession in a recognisable narrative context.

Urnamma A supports this interpretation and appears to represent another literary example of this model. It is important to note from the outset here that it is not entirely clear exactly what the cause of Ur-Namma's death is in the narrative. For example, Kramer and subsequently others have understood Ur-Namma to have been mortally wounded in battle, whilst some more recent scholarship has shown more caution in its assessment.⁵¹⁸ This is due to the fragmentary state of the narrative, which means that the actual agent of death is neither stated nor clear from the extant material. It is possible that the king lies mortally wounded, but it is also possible and perhaps more likely that he has fallen ill on campaign.⁵¹⁹ If the former is proven to be the case, then it would appear to extend the narrative structure to mortally wounded kings slowing expiring, but this cannot be advanced as yet. Nevertheless, in the example of Ur-Namma, as with the others, the Ur III period king lies stricken and incapacitated, eventually dying. In its fragmentary state the narrative does not provide us with a length of time over which Ur-Namma is in this fatal state before death, and it may never have provided such detail.⁵²⁰ However, as indicated above, the prescribed three days are referred to later in the narrative in what must refer to the king's funerary rites. The allusions to these funerary rites are naturally similar to that which I have discussed above considering the king's Ur III period locale. In addition to this, Ur-Namma's experience of the netherworld exhibits parallels with Enkidu's vision of his own journey.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ Kramer 1967:104; Wilcke 1970; Michalowski 1977:220; 2010:20; cf. Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:85-91; 93-95; 164-165; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:56.

⁵¹⁹ Cf. *Lugalbanda I*, where Lugalbanda falls ill on campaign; and the Babylonian Chronicles (ABC 1, col. iv.30-32; ABC 14, 31-33) which attest that Esarhaddon fell ill and died on campaign (Glassner 2004:202-203; 208-209)

⁵²⁰ *Urnamma A*, 31-51 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:106-110; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:58); cf. *Susa version*, 20-51 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:154-157).

⁵²¹ For example, both Enkidu and Ur-Namma encounter the shades of dead kings and priests upon arriving in the netherworld (George 2003:482-483); *Urnamma A* (Kramer 1967; Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:93-182; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:56-62).

All of the above makes it clear that we are dealing with a further example of the institutionalised narrative structure argued for and outlined. One should of course expect *Urnamma A* to exhibit such parallels and fit the institutionalised narrative pattern under discussion. Not only is Gilgamesh mentioned within the narrative itself, creating a similar connection between Ur-Namma and Gilgamesh as that between Gilgamesh and Lugalbanda, but all of the cited examples, with the obvious exception of Enkidu, co-exist in the literary environment of the Ur III period.⁵²² Further, as per Katz's study and outline of the Ur III period royal funerary rites, it is clear that this ideological structure for royal death stretched beyond the literature into genuine action.⁵²³

In summary, we appear to have overwhelming evidence for the presence of common ideology and an institutionalised narrative structure for the 'natural' death of the king in Mesopotamia in the Neo-Sumerian period. This in itself is not very startling and is to have been expected. However, its continuing impact upon the ideology and narration of royal death in Mesopotamia is pertinent. The narrative structure and ideology is clearly present in the Gilgamesh tradition from at least this period onwards through *The Death of Bilgames* poem. As an interconnected group, the narratives of Ur-Namma, Gilgamesh, and Lugalbanda help to transmit this ideological model through the Isin-Larsa period down to the point where the *OB Epic of Gilgamesh* is evident in surviving material. The institutionalised narrative structure is evidently engaged with to narrate the death of Enkidu in the *Epic*. The Enkidu of the *Epic* then serves as a visible narrative vehicle, which can be seen to carry the ideology and institutionalised narrative structure into the First Millennium BCE. This occurs alongside the parallel and also connected tradition of king Dumuzi and his cult.⁵²⁴ The content of K 164, and K 7856 and K 6323 clearly demonstrate that a genuine ritual connection was also maintained during the First Millennium BCE in Mesopotamian royal cultic activity centralised upon royal death and

⁵²² *Urnamma A*, 92-96, 132-144 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999: 85-91; 117-118; 124-126; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:59-60); Michalowski 2010.

⁵²³ Katz 2007; cf. Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:91.

⁵²⁴ Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:85-87.

illness.⁵²⁵ This all makes the case for the continuity of understanding difficult to deny, and so it is unlikely that the scenes of Enkidu's death and funeral would not have been recognised and understood as significantly royal. Finally, the identified group is populated by archetypal Mesopotamian monarchs directly connected with the Gilgamesh tradition making the connection meaningful. Enkidu's own position in this group not only enhances his claim to narrative kingship, but positions him as a literary model in his own right for this institutionalised narrative structure. Therefore, Enkidu is without doubt a king of Mesopotamia at this point in the narrative.⁵²⁶

With the institutionalised narrative structure established, it is then left to consider when and why it would have been employed. Michalowski has argued that the narration of the king's death was rare in Mesopotamia and that it was generally only employed when the king died prematurely or violently.⁵²⁷ Although such circumstances are clearly the case in the examples of Enkidu and Ur-Namma,⁵²⁸ I am not convinced that such an assertion can be maintained. The survival of narrative accounts detailing premature or violent deaths may have more to do with the fascination with abnormal occurrence, as there are examples that do not appear to fit these parameters. Notably Gilgamesh's own death in the *Death of Bilgames* does not appear to have been brought about violently or prematurely. Although it is not explicitly stated in *The Death of Bilgames*, it does appear to be implicit from the narrative and the wider tradition of Gilgamesh's life that he died in old age.⁵²⁹ This makes Michalowski's assertion difficult to sustain without further clarification, however, it is not irreconcilable. This is because prematurity is relative and the death of a king who was ideologically expected to have an abnormally long

⁵²⁵ McGinnis 1987; Scurlock 1992.

⁵²⁶ Cf. Appendix B for the continuity of this institutionalised narrative structure for the death of the Mesopotamian king in the narratives detailing the deaths of Cyrus and Alexander.

⁵²⁷ Michalowski 1977:220-221; cf. the *Sin of Sargon* (Tadmor, Landsberger & Parpola 1989).

⁵²⁸ It is also the case with the death of Alexander, see Appendix B.

⁵²⁹ *The Death of Bilgames* (George 1999; Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000); Sumerian King List, col.iii, 17-20, which states that Gilgamesh reigned as king for 126 years (Jacobsen 1939:88-91). This is also the case with the death of Cyrus in Xenophon (*Cyropaedia*, viii.7.1); cf. Appendix B.

reign whilst in the favour of the gods, would naturally require some sort of rationalisation.⁵³⁰

When the king dies, the conduit between heaven and earth, the divinely chosen agent, has perished, and as a result the natural order is shaken and mourns this tragic upheaval. Consider the vivid scenes of desolation in Sumer upon the king's death in *Urnamma A*. The civic and natural worlds are presented as stagnant or utterly destroyed upon the death of the king.⁵³¹ The ideology appears clear, it is not only the political or civic spheres that suffer the death of the king, but that the natural world cries out and seems to likewise suffer a kind of death. The continuity of this ideological reaction to royal death in Mesopotamia is evident through its repetition in the account of the funeral of the Neo-Assyrian king, Esarhaddon.⁵³² It is then again telling of Enkidu socio-political elevation that Gilgamesh articulates the mourning of the natural and civic worlds when Enkidu dies in the *Epic*.⁵³³ This further resonates with the identification of his death as specifically that of the king. It is a significant and potentially traumatic moment when the king is abandoned by the gods and permitted to die. The dying king's relationship with the gods would naturally come into question. Thus, the death of the king can be seen to represent a political and ideological stress point.

It would not be immediately clear upon the king's death exactly what had caused the divine departure and therefore potentially it is not just the individual's fate that is at stake. Ideologically and practically, the death of the king may represent the beginning of the cataclysmic fall of the current order. The king's death is a clear indication that the gods no longer sustain the individual's position in the mortal sphere, but the state also exists ideologically in a liminal position, waiting to see if this withdrawal of divine support extends beyond the dying monarch. This is what

⁵³⁰ For an example of this expectation, see the coronation prayer from the Middle Assyrian period, where it is symbolically and formulaically requested that the king reign for a century (Foster 2005:334).

⁵³¹ *Urnamma A*, 1-75 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:101-114; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:57-58).

⁵³² K.7856 + K.6323 rev. col. iv (McGinnis 1987:4-5).

⁵³³ *SB Epic*, viii.7-41 (George 2003:650-653).

underlies every death of the great king, the anxiety that it is not just the individual that has been abandoned, but the state as a whole.⁵³⁴ Its occurrence causes uncertainty, but as Cooper states it can be conceptualised solely in relation to the king's personal destiny. The royal death may to be interpreted as a commentary upon solely the dying king's impiety, or simply understood as the allotted time for change without any negative judgement of the outgoing monarch.⁵³⁵ The successor is critical to the establishment of stability in this moment and takes the central role in allaying fears of wider abandonment by the divine.

In such circumstances the narration of the divine assembly hereby serves a double function, not only to explain the reasons for the death of the king, but also to allay the fears of the audience/state that the alienation of the gods was limited to the individual. This convening of a special assembly of the gods to discuss and decree an individual's death appears to clearly amount to an example of exceptionalism in Mesopotamian society, specifically reserved for the death of the king. Consider how these circumstances are mirrored in *Urnamma A* and *The Death of Bilgames*. The divine dialogue may offer reassurances of the king's continued prominence in the afterlife, or simply detail the decision to bring on the king's death.⁵³⁶ In examples where death arrives violently or prematurely, this may require a rationalisation of the changed fate for the subject king.⁵³⁷ Therefore, considering the political stakes and the symbolic upheaval on the occasion of the death of the Mesopotamian monarch, I would argue that far from being a rare event, the narration and mythologizing of the king's death in Mesopotamia would have occurred without exception at each and every single such occurrence.

⁵³⁴ A possible example of this is the panic in Sumer in the opening six lines of *Urnamma A* (Kramer 1967:112; 117; Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:101; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:57).

⁵³⁵ Cooper 1983:29-30.

⁵³⁶ *Urnamma A* (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:93-182; Black, Cunningham, Robson and Zolyomi 2004:57-62) and *The Death of Bilgames* (George 1999:197-208; Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000:13-54). Cf. the dream sent to Cyrus in Xenophon (*Cyropaedia*, viii.7.2). Cyrus' dream does not narrate a divine assembly, but does recount the appearance of a divinity in the king's dream foretelling his death and continued prominence once he has left the mortal sphere. Note that like Gilgamesh, Cyrus appears to be joining the ranks of the gods, yet there is no mention of a chthonic role for the Teispid king.

⁵³⁷ See Katz (2007:184-185) for a comparable understanding of the divine assembly on the death of Ur-Namma.

It is therefore not surprising that we are presented with such an assembly before Enkidu's death in the *SB Epic*. For we are led to believe that Gilgamesh's own death is a possibility at this point and so we are without question dealing with a divine assembly to decide the changed fate of the king. If the hegemonic king (Gilgamesh) were to die suddenly, it would amount to drastic change for the mortal sphere, especially with no discernible successor in the narrative. This could amount to the fall of the current order. However, this is not the place for a cataclysmic change in the *Epic* and Enlil's decree assures us of that. Instead we are presented with the narration of normal succession, as Gilgamesh shifts into the role of successor and stabiliser. It seems that throughout the narration of Enkidu's death we are presented with details that not only support the identification of his newfound pseudo-kingship, but that can also be best explained by it.

5.2.1.2.4 The recognition of Enkidu's royal status at the point of his death

Although one cannot be exhaustive concerning the intricacies of royal death in Mesopotamia in the space available here, the argument above has clearly demonstrated that Enkidu's death is strikingly similar to that of a king's in a continuous Mesopotamian context.⁵³⁸ To help emphasise this narrative shift, Enkidu even starts to speak like a king during his lament in the *SB Epic*. Whilst cursing his patronage of the temple of Enlil at Nippur, Enkidu says of the temple door that he and Gilgamesh had dedicated after the Humbaba campaign,

e-nin-na^{giš} *dalat*(ig) *ana-ku e-pu-uš-ki ana-ku áš-ša*[*k-ki*:]
a-na-k[*u . . . ana-k*] *u a-na-as-saḥ-ki*
lu-u šarru(lugal) *šá e-la-a arki*(egir)-*iá li-<ze>-er-ki*:
lu-u ilu(dingir) *x*[. . .] *x*[(*x*)]-*šá li-ir-te-ki-m[a]*
šu-mi li-na-ak-ki-ir-ma šum-šú liš-kun:
it-ta-saḥ [.] *x-ma? id-d[i]*

Now, O door, it was I who made you, I who raised [you] up!
 Can I [. . . you,] can I tear you out?
 May either a king who comes after me abhor you,
 or a god [.] . . . may he hang you up!⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ For further, more in-depth, discussions of death in Mesopotamia see for examples, see Alster 1980; Bottero 1992:268-286; Jonker 1995; Katz 2005; Barrett 2007; Laneri 2007; Cohen 2012.

⁵³⁹ Alternatively, *li-ir-te-qí-m[a]*, 'may he hide (you)!' (George 2003:637).

May he remove my name and set up his own!
 he tore out [.] . . . he threw down.
 (*SB Epic*, vii.59-64)⁵⁴⁰

The temple dedication at Nippur that followed the Humbaban campaign and should have ensured a decree of long-lived kingship by Enlil for the new hegemonic king has become completely Enkidu's own. Despite Enkidu's role in its construction, Gilgamesh, as the king and victor would have surely been the dedicator and patron of Enlil's temple.⁵⁴¹ Enkidu has fully assumed Gilgamesh's royal position and is claiming the sole patronage for the door. As Enlil has changed his fate and cut short the king's (Enkidu's) reign, the dedication is deemed worthless. The wording is conspicuous. Enkidu invokes a 'king' who comes after him to remove his name from the door and set up his own. This is not a request made directly to his friend and king, Gilgamesh, as one might expect if no substitution or narrative displacement has been understood. Instead, we are presented with a lament akin to that of a dying king, charging those who follow him to remove or reclaim his misguided dedication that has served him so poorly. Enkidu has transferred to his position as the expiring ruler and is now speaking as one, whilst at the same time confirming Gilgamesh's liminal status. Through the act of inscribed dedication and the charging of the inscription's fate to the hands of a subsequent king, Enkidu's identification with the dying monarch again seems inescapable. His demand of a successor in relation to his inscription aligns with known royal practice in Mesopotamia, albeit normally expressed with the desire for preservation of the inscription.⁵⁴²

This newly occupied royal position for Enkidu is also clearly demonstrated through his reception in the netherworld. Enkidu's second dream in Tablet VII narrates a vision of his forthcoming descent and arrival in the netherworld. Those whom he encounters first are the shades of previously deceased kings, shortly followed by the priestly class, as he passes through the chthonic court to stand in front of its queen, Ereshkigal.⁵⁴³ George has understood these royal shades as a commentary

⁵⁴⁰ George 2003:636-637.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. OB IM, 19-28; *SB Epic*, v.289-302 (George 2003:268-271; 612-615).

⁵⁴² For example, see Sennacherib, E1, col. viii.77-87 (Luckenbill 1924:116).

⁵⁴³ *SB Epic*, vii.193-205 (George 2003:644-645).

in the *Epic* upon the impermanence of earthly wealth and status after death.⁵⁴⁴

This has an aspect of truth about it and is also an understanding more generally applicable to a wider audience. Enkidu's accounting of these socio-political elites in the afterlife would without doubt cause one to make a comparison with their earthly status.⁵⁴⁵ However, as Barrett argues, this segregation actually demonstrates that one's earthly prominence was relatively maintained in the societal organisation of the netherworld.⁵⁴⁶

Therefore, it is pertinent that Enkidu is presented as encountering previously deceased kings and passing through the chthonic court en route to Ereshkigal. If Enkidu is not conceptualised as the king at the point of his death, and if his funerary rites are not specifically those of the Mesopotamian monarch, then it is not clear why he would be received thus or how he would gain such access through the chthonic court. I would argue that this kingly reception among the shades more precisely indicates the earthly position from which Enkidu has come. *Urnamma A* offers a ready parallel, as the Neo-Sumerian king is likewise greeted in the netherworld by the previously deceased kings and priests en route through the chthonic court ahead of a banquet that will confirm his prominence among the shades.⁵⁴⁷ Whether Enkidu's socio-political elevation was maintained by the chthonic court after the reception and upon judgement would require further fragments of the narrative to be recovered.⁵⁴⁸

Thus, Enkidu's initial encounters in the netherworld are not only a commentary upon one's condition in the afterlife in comparison to one's earthly lot, but they also signify the social and political class to which Enkidu belongs. Enkidu's position

⁵⁴⁴ George 2003:482.

⁵⁴⁵ Cf. Ur-Namma's lament once in the netherworld bemoaning all that he has lost and left behind compared to his current lot (*Urnamma A*, 145-195; Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:126-134; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:60-61).

⁵⁴⁶ Barrett 2007:9. For the 'societal aspect' of the netherworld and its conceptualisation of a city state where kings could maintain a degree of prominence, see Katz (2003:113-126).

⁵⁴⁷ *Urnamma A*, 76-144 (Kramer 1967:114-115; 118-119; Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:115-126; Black, Cunningham, Robson & Zolyomi 2004:59-60).

⁵⁴⁸ Although I suspect this would be unlikely due to reaction of Ereshkigal (possibly Bēlet-šēri) when confronted with the figure of Enkidu (*SB Epic*, vii.203-208; George 2003:644-645).

as king at the point of death is confirmed, as he first encounters his previously deceased socio-political peers. Enkidu's conceptual transfer to the position of king at the point of his death in the *Epic*, and his subsequent royal funerary rites gain him access to the chthonic court and may potentially assure him a position in it. This social stratification in the afterlife appears to be a critical function of the king's funeral.⁵⁴⁹ As Barrett states, what would be the point of extravagant grave goods if they bore no relevance in the netherworld and such a nihilist view was held of the afterlife.⁵⁵⁰ Once the deceased king's position in the chthonic court had been assured by the funerary rites, the stated need to continue to make regular offerings is simply to sustain the deceased, much as tribute maintains the king in the mortal realm.⁵⁵¹

5.2.2 Gilgamesh, the acceding king

The funeral of Enkidu is also a significant event for the character of Gilgamesh, as it demonstrates clearly that he has not simply been displaced in the narrative. He has undertaken a narrative shift of his own and is now re-positioned conceptually as 'son' and successor. He fulfils the duties of the crown prince and attends to the funeral of his 'father' and predecessor. The conventional identification of the son in this role is found elsewhere within the Gilgamesh tradition itself, and so makes Gilgamesh's narrative shift conspicuous even within his own tradition. Veldhuis has demonstrated that it is Gilgamesh's son who attends to his funeral and burial in *The Death of Bilgames*.⁵⁵² Compare this to the extant example of a Neo-Assyrian king's funeral and Gilgamesh's newfound narrative position is evident. It is clearly the king's son (probably Assurbanipal) who is attending to the royal funeral of Esarhaddon (?) on K 7856 and K 6323.⁵⁵³ This necessary act of filial duty is a significant part of the path of accession, especially if the illusion of normal

⁵⁴⁹ Katz 2005:80.

⁵⁵⁰ Barrett 2007:9ff.

⁵⁵¹ Michalowski 1977:221ff; Barrett 2007:8-9; cf. *SB Epic*, xii.90-153 (George 2003:732-735); *Bilgames and the Netherworld*, 246ff (Shaffer 1963:86-98; 115-121; George 1999:187-189; Gadotti 2014:159-161; 167-169).

⁵⁵² Veldhuis 2001.

⁵⁵³ McGinnis 1987; George 2003:485n.134.

succession or continuity is to be maintained. For, as I have already stated above, the dead king is not the only significant figure in the ritual action of the king's funeral, in fact, he may be considered somewhat secondary to his successor. Just as the king's death causes upheaval, the king's funeral represents a set-piece where order is re-established. The homage offered to the dead king by subordinates at his funeral at the same time honours the funeral's 'master of ceremonies' and confirms his position as successor. The king's funeral also naturally interacts with the divine. The fulfilment of the filial duties intrinsic to the funerary rites emphasise the successor's piety, and engage with the establishment of divine support for his accession and rule.

After Gilgamesh has fulfilled these filial duties, our protagonist embarks upon his wanderings. At first glance, one may be forgiven for understanding this as a rejection of the city and our protagonist's new role, but instead it should be understood to the contrary. Gilgamesh's mythical wanderings can be partly understood as an expression of mourning, but they are more overtly motivated by a fear of sharing a similar fate,

^dGlŠ-gím-maš a-na ^den-ki-dù ib-ri-šu
 šar-piš i-bak-ki-ma i-rap-pu-ud šēra(edin)
 a-na-ku a-mat-ma ul ki-i ^den-ki-dù-ma-a
 ni-is-sa-a-tum i-te-ru-ub ina kar-ši-ia
 mu-ta ap-làḥ-ma a-rap-pu-ud šēra(edin)
 a-na le-et ^mUD-napišti(zi) mār(dumu) ^mubara-^dtu-tu
 ur-ḥa šab-ta-ku-ma ḥa-an-ṭiš al-lak

For his friend Enkidu Gilgamesh
 was weeping bitterly as he roamed the wild:
 'I shall die, and shall I not then be like Enkidu?
 Sorrow has entered my heart.
 I became afraid of death, so go roaming the wild,
 to Ūta-napishti, son of Ubār-Tutu,
 I am on the road and travelling swiftly.
 (SB Epic, ix.1-7)⁵⁵⁴

What may be understood as a general fear of death brought about by the loss of a companion (making the narrative widely relatable), can also be applied to the

⁵⁵⁴ George 2003:666-667.

kingship. Gilgamesh desires to escape the fate of his predecessor and remain in the gods' favour, thus long-lived and ideologically immortal.

An extreme and relevant example of this desire to escape the fate allotted to one's predecessor may be seen in narrative known as the *Sin of Sargon*. Sargon II's son, Sennacherib, goes to great lengths to uncover the impiety on the part of his father that led to the divine abandonment, so that he will not repeat the mistake and suffer a similar fate. Even though Sennacherib is presented in the narrative as uncovering the sin of Sargon, he ends up repeating the sins of the father and suffering divine abandonment and death. The narrative then instructs someone, who presumably must be Esarhaddon, to not succumb to the same fate by repeating the same errors.⁵⁵⁵

Therefore, each king is bound by his concern for his personal well-being to escape his predecessor's ('father's') fate. This would not be a concern that exclusively related to the successors of those who suffered a violent death, but instead one associated with all royal death and its intrinsic divine abandonment. An attempt is undertaken by the acceding king to learn how to appease and serve the gods, so that he may live long and conceptually reign forever. Although this goal is ultimately unachievable, as all kings must die at some point, Gilgamesh sets out on such a journey. After the death of his 'predecessor' he decides to set out in search of the one prince/king in Mesopotamian tradition said to have achieved immortality and escaped the fate of man, Uta-napishti.⁵⁵⁶ This journey will ultimately see Gilgamesh prepared for his kingship, a rite of passage that converts our protagonist from crown prince or fledgling king to Mesopotamian monarch proper. It is therefore clear that the death of the king (Enkidu) functions as a 'primary episode' for the 'secondary episode' of Gilgamesh's mythical wanderings, acting as a catalyst for them. Before the function of the wanderings can be evaluated and argued

⁵⁵⁵ Tadmor, Landsberger & Parpola 1989:9-17.

⁵⁵⁶ For Utanapishti, see George 2003:152-155. Cf. *Sumerian King List*, 30-39 (Jacobsen 1939:74-77), where Uta-napishti's father, Ubar-Tutu, is named as the last king before the Flood; *Eridu Genesis* (iii.20), where the Flood hero is said to be king at the time of the Flood (Jacobsen 1981:521-522); Berossus (F4a) also has the Flood hero as king at the time of the Deluge (Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996:49).

further, it is necessary to present the comparable structure in the Alexander tradition.

5.2.3 A comparable 'primary episode' and the same narrative structure in the Alexander narratives

This can be achieved in an easy and succinct manner in our receptor tradition. As stated near the outset of this chapter, Darius III was the great king and so his death without question represents the death of the king.⁵⁵⁷ There is no need to make any detailed case for the narrative re-positioning of Darius as was necessary above with Enkidu. All that remains is to re-position Alexander conceptually as the king's 'son' and successor, and to demonstrate that Darius' death can likewise be understood as the 'primary episode' and catalyst for Alexander's mythical wanderings. Both of these requirements are overtly met in the *First Miracle Letter* in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (ii.23-41) narratives. This letter of wonders details Alexander's mythical wanderings and directly connects them to the death of his predecessor, Darius.⁵⁵⁸ Alexander begins the letter by summarising his defeat of Darius and then goes on to address the great king's death,

καταλειφθεὶς δὲ Δαρεῖος συνελήφθη καὶ ἐτραυματίσθη παρὰ τῶν αὐτοῦ σατραπῶν. ἐγὼ δὲ λίαν ἐλυμήθην περὶ αὐτοῦ. νικήσας γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐκ ἐβουλόμην φονεῦσαι, ἀλλ' ἔχειν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τὰ ἐμὰ σκῆπτρα. ἔμπνουν δὲ τοῦτον καταλαβὼν, περιελὼν δὲ τὴν περικειμένην μοι χλαμύδα τοῦτον ἐσκέπασα. εἴτα ὑπονοήσας τὸ τῆς ἀδήλου τύχης ἐπὶ τὸ τοῦ Δαρείου ὑπόδειγμα τοῦτον ἐθρήνησα. κηδεύσας οὖν βασιλικῶς ἐκέλευσα ἀποτμηθῆναι ῥῖνας καὶ ὠτίαι τῶν φυλασσόντων αὐτοῦ τὸν τάφον, τῇ κατὰ τὴν χώραν συνηθεί<α> ἐξακολουθῶν. τοὺς δὲ ἀνελόντας Δαρεῖον ἐκέλευσα ἀνασταυρωθῆναι ἐν τῷ τάφῳ Δαρείου. ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ἐξελθὼν κατεκράτησα Ἀρειοβαρζάν καὶ Μαναζακοῦ βασιλείαν· Μηδίαν τε καὶ Ἀρμενίαν, Ἑβείαν καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν Περσικὴν χώραν ἧς ἐβασίλευεν Δαρεῖος ὑπέταξα.

'Darius was deserted, and then seized and murdered by his own satraps. I was very sorry for him. I did not want him to be killed after his defeat, but to live under my rule. I came upon him still alive, and took off my cloak to cover him. Then I reflected on the uncertainty of fortune, as exemplified in the fate of Darius, and I lamented him. I buried him royally, and gave orders to cut off the noses and ears of those who guarded his grave, as is the custom here. I had the murderers of Darius crucified on his grave. Then I went and

⁵⁵⁷ For the various traditions around the death of Darius III, see Briant 2015:394-422.

⁵⁵⁸ Henkelman 2010:350-351.

conquered the kingdom of Ariobarzanes and Manazakes. I subdued Media and Armenia, Ebesia and all the kingdom of Persia that had formerly belonged to Darius.' (Pseudo-Callisthenes, ii.23.3-5)⁵⁵⁹

The above passage encapsulates our 'primary episode' in a mere paragraph. The great king, Darius, dies. His death is mourned by his successor, Alexander, and it causes Alexander to reflect upon his own fate. Alexander fulfils his 'filial' duty and attends to the funeral of his predecessor. The rest of the Persian Empire is subdued in a couple of sentences (note that India is placed outside the empire in these narratives), and then the narratives embark upon Alexander's mythical wanderings of accession. Therefore, through the content and structure of the *First Miracle Letter* it is impossible to deny the connection between the two events, or that the same narrative structure is present at same point of transfer in both our subject traditions. The death of the king occurs. His successor mourns and attends to his funeral. The successor reflects upon his own fate as a result of his predecessor's demise, and then embarks upon his mythical wanderings of accession. Alexander will wander as Gilgamesh had done in tradition, due to the same reflective reaction to his 'predecessor's' demise.

Just as we have seen in the example of Gilgamesh above, the narrative shift for Alexander to the position of 'son' and successor is likewise confirmed through his undertaking of the funerary rites of his predecessor (Darius in this case). Alexander fulfils the duties of the 'son', utilising the funeral as a set-piece to reposition himself to the position of legitimate successor. It is conspicuous that the quoted passage states that Alexander executed the regicides over the grave of Darius. This dutiful act of 'justice' to placate the dead king's ghost is certainly a filial responsibility. Note how Alexander is said to carry out a similar execution of regicides at the tomb of his father, Philip.⁵⁶⁰ Compare this act to Assurbanipal's execution of regicides on

⁵⁵⁹ *L-text* (Van Thiel 1974:104-105; Dowden 1989:705; Stoneman 1991:115); *beta* (Stoneman 2012:126-127); cf. *gamma*, ii.23; 43 (Stoneman 2012:194-195; 292-293); *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:111-116); and also, *A-text*, iii.17.8-12 (Kroll 1958:107-108; Stoneman 1991:182-183). Also see, *Epsilon*, 34 (Trumpf 1974:122-127; Merkelbach 1977:138).

⁵⁶⁰ Justin, xi.2.1; cf. Justin, ix.7.10-11, where potentially similarly dutiful activities by Olympias are pejoratively presented. We are then forced to consider the possibility that this may represent a corruption of Olympias' dutiful response to her husband's murder.

the spot where his grandfather (Sennacherib) was murdered, and Alexander's identification at the funeral of Darius is unmistakably familial and filial.⁵⁶¹

Gamma emphasises Alexander's narrative shift at this point by placing Alexander's marriage to Darius' 'daughter', Roxane, directly after the recounting of the king's funeral.⁵⁶²

That which is subtly imbedded within the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, constantly hits one over the head in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives. Alexander's shift to son and successor is taken on in quite literal terms. Darius uses his dying words in Alexander's arms to legitimise our protagonist king and to draft him into his family in the position of son and successor. This is seamlessly achieved by presenting Alexander's wife, Roxane, as the daughter of Darius rather than Oxyartes in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives.⁵⁶³ However, such legitimising movements are not restricted to the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives: Diodorus refers to the tradition that Darius tasked Alexander with avenging him; Curtius presents Darius branding his satraps traitors and Alexander as his protector; as Arrian narrates the death of the great king he refers to the royal funeral that Alexander affords Darius, Alexander's protection of Darius' family, and Alexander's marriage to his predecessor's daughter; and Plutarch presents Darius' final words and legitimising final gesture to Alexander through the intermediary of Polystratus.⁵⁶⁴ This conversion of Alexander, from the position of invader to that of legitimate successor through death of Darius, is well understood.⁵⁶⁵

In addition to these parallels in structure and content between the two traditions at this particular point of transfer, a complementary and comparable liminal relationship between our protagonists and their predecessors is then identified in both traditions. I have argued above that Gilgamesh is presented in the *Epic* as both

⁵⁶¹ Tsukimoto 1985:112-114; n.405; Scurlock 2013:153-155.

⁵⁶² *Gamma*, ii.23.8 (gamma; Stoneman 2012:194-195).

⁵⁶³ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.20; A-text (Stoneman 2012:58-63); beta (Stoneman 2012:112-117); L-text (Van Thiel 1974:94-97; Stoneman 1991:108-110); *Syriac*, ii.12 (Budge 1889:79-81). For Oxyartes as the father of Roxane, see for example, Arrian, *Anab.* iv.20.4. Note that in the *Syriac* (ii.12; Budge 1889:80), a dying Darius addresses Alexander with 'My son Alexander'.

⁵⁶⁴ Diod. xvii.73.4; QCR, v.13.16; Arrian, *Anab.* iii.22.6; Plut. Alex. 43.

⁵⁶⁵ Lane Fox 2004:270; Badian 2012:469-470; Briant 2015:394-422.

the brother of Enkidu and conceptually positioned as his 'son' and successor at the point of the latter's death. The same liminal relationship is evidently attested between Alexander and Darius. Alexander's relationship with Darius' mother, Sisygambis, presents us with a fraternal equality akin to that evident in the *Epic* between Gilgamesh and Enkidu. Alexander is claimed to have looked upon Sisygambis as a mother and she upon him as a son, in what should be understood as a de facto adoption.⁵⁶⁶ Sisygambis, like Ninsun, acts as the legitimising mother and creates the parity of brotherhood between Alexander and Darius. One should note that in the *Epic* Enkidu and Gilgamesh also begin as rivals and progress to brotherhood.⁵⁶⁷ When this is paired with Gilgamesh's disingenuous offer of his sisters in marriage to Huwawa in *GH A*, then this progression from rivalry to fraternity is well attested within the Gilgamesh tradition.⁵⁶⁸ Thus, Alexander and Darius present an obvious comparative pairing to Gilgamesh and Enkidu in Alexander's narrative tradition. Substantiating this arrangement, Alexander likewise shifts into succeeding position of a father-son dynamic with his predecessor at the point of Darius' death. Just as I have argued for Gilgamesh in the *Epic*. This liminal relationship between Alexander and Darius is articulated in Darius' dying words when he asks Alexander to treat his mother as if she were his own and to marry his daughter.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, conceptually Alexander is both brother and son to his dying predecessor.

Therefore, in summary, we are told that Alexander mourns Darius and that the Persian king's death forces him to contemplate the vicissitudes of fortune and how even the great king's fate can change as fortune abandons him. Alexander then acts as a son and successor should and carries out the funerary rites of his predecessor. He assumes the mantle of great king and then decides to embark upon his mythical wanderings. Not only does Alexander grieve for his rival and 'predecessor' just as Gilgamesh does in the *Epic*, but this death of the king likewise causes Alexander to

⁵⁶⁶ Diod. xvii.37.3-38.1; QCR, iii.12.13-25; v.2.18-22; v.3.12-15; x.5.19-25.

⁵⁶⁷ *OB II*, col. v.177-col. vi.239; *SB Epic*, ii.100-115; iii.120-128 (George 2003:178-181; 562-563; 580-581).

⁵⁶⁸ *GH A*, 138-144 (Edzard 1991:211-213; George 1999:156); cf. Podany's (2010) study on the brotherhood of kings in the ancient Near East.

⁵⁶⁹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.20.11 (*beta*; Stoneman 2012:114-115).

reflect upon the uncertainty of his own fate, ultimately launching his expedition to the limits. Thus, in both of our subject traditions the comparable wanderings are motivated by similar concerns and undertaken as a result of the same event. The death and funeral of the king is demonstrably understood as the 'primary episode' for both Gilgamesh's and Alexander's mythical wanderings. This contextualisation strengthens the case for the previously recognised parallels concerning this episode type (i.e. mythical wanderings) between the two traditions and securely contextualises the comparison.

It should be emphasised here that Henkelman has previously identified the conspicuous parallel placement of Darius' death within the *First Miracle Letter*. He also argued that Alexander's wanderings appear to have been motivated by his encounter with the dying Darius. He concluded that there was no connection between the Gilgamesh-Enkidu and Alexander-Darius narrative dynamics, but that structurally they occupied parallel positions in relation to each protagonist's wanderings.⁵⁷⁰ My argument evidently alters this conclusion. Whatever Darius' dying moments and final encounter with Alexander developed into as the tradition progressed, their intrinsic connection to the filial piety of the successor cannot be denied. As a result of that which I have argued above, this is now seen to be directly paralleled in the narrative dynamic between Enkidu and Gilgamesh in the *Epic* at the point of the former's death. This re-contextualisation also removes Stoneman's objection that the Alexander tradition does not contain comparable grief on the part of our protagonists.⁵⁷¹ Although Alexander's grief may not be as pronounced as Gilgamesh's, it is clearly the same sort of self-reflective grief brought about by the demise of one's predecessor and peer.

Finally, while the *First Miracle Letter* is useful for securely demonstrating the direct structural relationship between Darius' death and Alexander's mythical wanderings, one should not be bound by the confines of the letter. It is highly unlikely that this was the original format or genre for the narrated content, which is not even so

⁵⁷⁰ Henkelman 2010:350-351.

⁵⁷¹ Stoneman 1992:99.

bound across the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives. The *A-text* maintains the same structural relationship within an alternative letter to Aristotle about the wonders of India.⁵⁷² Yet the most significant presentation of the material is in the gamma recension. *Gamma* starts with a letter to Olympias and Aristotle detailing events comparably to *beta* and *L-text* (with the addition of the marriage to Roxane). Towards the end of chapter twenty-three, the letter suddenly breaks off and the narrative continues largely in the third person.⁵⁷³ What follows is an extended, but comparable account of the events found in the *First Miracle Letter* in *beta*, *L-text*, and the *Armenian*.⁵⁷⁴ After all of this has been narrated (largely third person narrative), *gamma* then refers to the *First Miracle Letter* in summary stating that it recounted all of these adventures to Olympias and Aristotle.⁵⁷⁵ *Gamma* clearly exhibits the combination of more than one source for these passages.

However, the most pertinent detail gleaned from *gamma* is that there is clearly a Seleucid source, very probably dated to the co-regency of Seleucus I and Antiochus I (c.292-281 BCE), underlying the structural arrangement between the episodes and the episode type. Thus making it extremely pertinent to our discussion and the identified Gilgamesh parallels.⁵⁷⁶ Further, it would appear that *gamma* is in places more faithful to this Seleucid source, with the letters in *beta*, *Armenian*, and *L-text* representing redactions (note that all will also contain interpolations). The easiest way to prove both of these points is the campaign against Egypt narrated in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.23-28. This campaign is overtly narrated and greatly expanded in *gamma* with chapters 24-28 present only in this recension (also in *epsilon*).⁵⁷⁷ These chapters detail a repositioning of the conquest of Egypt from a Seleucid standpoint. This obviously allows for continuity with Persian and Mesopotamian conquests of Egypt in recent centuries, whilst providing a pseudo-

⁵⁷² *A-text*, iii.17.8-12 (Kroll 1958:107-108; Stoneman 1991:182-183).

⁵⁷³ *Gamma*, ii.23.9 (Stoneman 2012:194-197).

⁵⁷⁴ *Gamma*, ii.23-42

⁵⁷⁵ *Gamma*, ii.43 (Stoneman 2012:292-297).

⁵⁷⁶ For the co-regency, see Kugler 1922:309-312; 1924:439; Parker & Dubberstein 1942:19; Bengtson 1944:80.

⁵⁷⁷ Note that *gamma*, ii.24 narrates Alexander's engagement with Jerusalem and his respect for the Jewish god en route to Egypt (Stoneman 2012:196-199). Cf. *Epsilon*, 20-24 (Trumpf 1974:75-88; Merkelbach 1977:136-137).

Alexandrian (the man, not the city) precedent for Seleucid campaigns against the Ptolemies. Both Seleucus and Antiochus feature heavily in the campaign narrative already indicating a date for this re-orientation of Alexander's campaign in the co-regency.⁵⁷⁸ Significantly, the narrative engages with the tradition of Nectanebo and Alexander prevalent in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, attempting to marginalise Alexander's Egyptianisation.⁵⁷⁹ It appears that we can detect a Perso-Mesopotamian and Seleucid response to an Egyptian and Ptolemaic appropriation of Alexander. With Egypt subdued and the empire organised and settled, *gamma* sets Alexander off on his wanderings from Egypt (29-31) finally rejoining *beta* and the *L-text* at chapter thirty-two.⁵⁸⁰

That this Egyptian campaign in *gamma* represents an expanded account of a campaign present in the *First Miracle Letter* of the other *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, rather than an interpolation in *gamma*, is demonstrated by the universal reference in these other narratives to the conquest of the kingdom of Mazaces in Alexander's succinct settlement of the empire at the death of his predecessor.⁵⁸¹ As Gunderson and Stoneman have identified this was Darius' satrap of Egypt, attested in Arrian, who surrendered Egypt to Alexander in the aftermath of Issus.⁵⁸² A familiar re-orientated Egyptian campaign appears clear. Stoneman highlighted that there are no references connecting Mazaces with the regions of Mesopotamia and Iran (and further North around the Caspian) that the rest of the succinct summary in chapter twenty-three of *Pseudo-Callisthenes* appears to indicate.⁵⁸³ This is because the conquest of the kingdom of Mazaces does not refer to these regions, but instead refers to the Egyptian campaign narrated in detail in *gamma*. The campaign is dealt with in shorthand by *beta*, *L-text*, and the *Armenian* (perhaps the *First Miracle Letter* more generally), just as the other campaigns after Darius' death

⁵⁷⁸ *Gamma*, ii.23.9; 25.7-9, 18-19; 28.1-2, 5 (Stoneman 2012:194-197; 200-203; 208-209).

⁵⁷⁹ *Gamma*, ii.26-27 (Stoneman 2012:202-209). See Stoneman (2008:6-24) for a discussion of Alexander's Egyptian nativity.

⁵⁸⁰ *Gamma*, ii.29-32 (Stoneman 2012:208-217).

⁵⁸¹ *Beta*, ii.23.7 (Stoneman 2012:126-127); *L-text*, ii.23.5 (van Thiel 1974:104-105); *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112).

⁵⁸² Arrian, *Anab.* iii.1.2; Gunderson 1980:76; Stoneman 2012:416. Cf. Bosworth 1980:261; Berve 1926:n.485.

⁵⁸³ Stoneman 2012:416.

are in chapter twenty-three of *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. This conclusion is confirmed by the absence of any reference to the conquest of the kingdom of Mazaces in chapter twenty-three of *gamma*, clearly demonstrating that the conquest of the kingdom of Mazaces was understood as referring to the Egyptian campaign that followed in this recension.⁵⁸⁴

The significance of a Seleucid source underpinning the contents of the *First Miracle Letter* and its positioning in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives cannot be understated. Further, this source's probable dating to the co-regency is significant for the identified Gilgamesh parallels in a number of ways. It provides us with a relatively secure and early date through which we can confidently identify and explain the existence of Gilgamesh parallels in the narratives of Alexander's mythical wanderings (this will be expanded upon when we return to Alexander's wanderings below). The common structural arrangement, comparable ideology, and evident shared content make the case for identifying comparisons between the Gilgamesh and Alexander narrative traditions unassailable and now tangibly locatable in both time and space. It should still be understood as a common engagement with Mesopotamian kingship ideology, but it is becoming more difficult to deny the possibility of direct emulation. This being established, we now have a much sturdier platform from which to analyse common features of each protagonist king's mythical wanderings, and so can advance this section of the study.

⁵⁸⁴ *Gamma*, ii.23 (Stoneman 2012:194-197).

Chapter Six

The mythical wanderings of accession: the maturation of the successor to kingly knowledge

6.1 The mythical wanderings of accession

As the last chapter has shown the mythical wanderings in both our subject traditions were motivated by the same event, the death of the king. It is also clear that both of our protagonists undergo a narrative shift that positions them in the role of 'son' and successor. In the present chapter I will demonstrate that their resultant mythical wanderings functioned comparably, fulfilling certain ideological criteria required for one to legitimately accede to the kingship. Thus I have labelled them the 'wanderings of accession'. They prepare the 'new' king for his position as ruler and as the earthly conduit between man and the gods. They also confirm him as the legitimate successor. As is to be expected, this process is clearer and more developed in the Gilgamesh tradition, but it certainly applies to both kings' mythical journeys. The more developed and subtle expression of the ideology in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is more directly stated and simplistic in the Alexander narratives. This indicates that it is more keenly the ideology that is being transmitted, rather than simply the action imitated. This is something that the following argument will set forth.

The wanderings can be broken down into three parts: a journey to the conceptual limits. These limits are conceptualised as to align with the imperial space already established in the narratives by the predecessor; the journey then progresses beyond the limits into a mythical sphere which serves to confirm that the mortal limits have been reached and surpassed; finally, the acquisition of knowledge is completed, and the king is returned ready to rule. This journey to the limits not only symbolically ratifies the successor's kingship, but also serves to renew Mesopotamian kingship at the point of transfer. The successor himself undergoes a change and is converted to Mesopotamian monarch proper as the succession is

realised. The special knowledge that the acceding king acquires on this journey sets him apart, confirms his special status, and enables him to rule in harmony with the gods. I will begin the argument for this contextualisation with Gilgamesh's wanderings and then move on to the comparison with Alexander, as has been the case in the study thus far.

6.2.1 Gilgamesh's journey to and beyond the limits

Gilgamesh's mythical wanderings of accession occupy the final three tablets of the eleven-tablet *SB Epic*.⁵⁸⁵ Our protagonist's quest for immortality dominates the narrative in these tablets and so there is a risk that this can also take over the analysis of the king's wanderings. However, Gilgamesh is ultimately unsuccessful in this endeavour, making this dominant motif obstructive to our understanding of how the wanderings function in relation to one's kingship. It is the contention of this study that the significance of the wanderings is better understood through that which they actually achieve, not through any failed endeavour. It is worth noting that Utanapishti explains to Gilgamesh at length in the *Epic* that such a quest for immortality constitutes a fool's errand.⁵⁸⁶ Therefore, the search for immortality itself is understood within the *Epic* to represent a pseudo-motive that galvanises an immature protagonist into undertaking a necessary journey. I have already demonstrated that the desire to escape death was linked to an ideal of immortality for kings when ruling in harmony with the gods. Conceptually this was achieved, or one's reign was prolonged, by ruling as the gods' desired. The knowledge of how to do this must be acquired or transmitted in succession. This maturing to kingly knowledge is how the wanderings functioned for the acceding monarch in Mesopotamia.

The most efficient way of discerning this functionality for Gilgamesh's wanderings is to refer to how the tradition itself summarises them. Three significant summaries

⁵⁸⁵ See George (2003:490-528) for a detailed exegesis of these tablets; cf. Clark (1997) who understands this journey as one to an alternative afterlife and back.

⁵⁸⁶ *SB Epic*, xi.1-246 (George 2003:702-719).

are provided: the first is in the *Death of Bilgames*; and the second and third are in the prologue to the *Epic*.⁵⁸⁷ These summaries are highly instructive and significantly provide us with a secure interpretation of Gilgamesh's mythical wanderings from within the tradition. In the second half of the prologue to the *Epic*, we are provided with this summary of Gilgamesh's wanderings,

ši-i-ḫu ^dGIŠ-gim-maš git-ma-lu ra-šub-bu
 pe-tu-ú né-re-bé-e-ti šá ḫur-sa-a-ni
 he-ru-ú bu-ú-ri šá kišād(gú) šadī(kur)ⁱ
 e-bir a-ab-ba ta-ma-ti rapašti(dagal)^{ti} adi(en) šīt šamši(^dutu.è)
 ḫa-a-a-iṭ kib-ra-a-ti muš-te-ú ba-lá-ṭi
 ka-šid dan-nu-us-su a-na ^mUD-napišti(zi) ru-ú-qí
 mu-ter ma-ḫa-zi ana aš-ri-šú-nu šá ú-ḫal-li-qu a-bu-bu
 mu-kin par-ši ana nišī(ùg)^{meš} a-pa-a-ti
 man-nu <šá> it-ti-šu iš-šá-an-na-nu a-na šarru(lugal)-ti
 ù ki-i ^dGIŠ-gím-maš i-qab-bu-ú a-na-ku-ma šarru(lugal)

'Gilgamesh so tall, perfect and terrible,
 who opened passes in the mountains;
 who dug wells on the hill-flanks,
 and crossed the ocean, the wide sea, as far as the sunrise;
 who scoured the world-regions ever searching for life,
 and reached by his strength⁵⁸⁸ Ūta-napishti the Far-Away;
 who restored the cult-centres that the Deluge destroyed,
 and established the proper rites for the human race!
 Who is there that can be compared with him in kingly status,
 and can say like Gilgamesh, "It is I am the king"?'
 (SB *Epic*, i.37-46)⁵⁸⁹

This summary would very probably have been part of the shorter prologue of the *OB Epic*, before it was complemented by the extended prologue in a later version.⁵⁹⁰ Thus it is understood as an ever present summary of Gilgamesh's wanderings in the *Epic* as we currently have it. This summary, explicitly references Gilgamesh's acquisition of knowledge, but there is also an implicit accomplishment. In Gilgamesh's search for Utanapishti and his journey to him, our protagonist is understood to transverse the entire world. These are the two achievements of the mythical wanderings. Gilgamesh acquires the knowledge that a king must have in order to guide the people in the appropriate practices in relation to the divine, and

⁵⁸⁷ DG, M52-61; M143-152 (George 1999:198-199; 202; Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000:27; 30-31; 56); *SB Epic*, i.1-23; 37-46 (George 2003:538-541; cf. George 2007b:239-241).

⁵⁸⁸ Alternatively, 'through great danger' (George 2003:541).

⁵⁸⁹ George 2003:540-541.

⁵⁹⁰ George 2003:28-29.

he gains knowledge of the limits of the conceptual world. He is understood to have reached every corner and campaigned to every land.⁵⁹¹ These acts are then connected in the summary of the wanderings in the *Epic* to Gilgamesh's superlative kingship.

The literal and subjective acquisition of knowledge will be returned to below, but this attested journey to the limits is a significant aspect of the wanderings. The exact details of Gilgamesh's wanderings are currently lost to us due to the fragmentary condition of tablet IX.⁵⁹² However, it is clear from the summary in the prologue (quoted above) and some other details that do survive that this is a journey to the limits and across the entire earth.⁵⁹³ In the course of his wanderings during tablet IX Gilgamesh arrives at Mount Māšu (lit. Twin) and encounters a pair of scorpion companions who guard the rising and the setting of the sun. Mount Māšu is one of a pair of colossal mountains in a Mesopotamian conceptualisation of world geography. Each one of the Twins stretched from the netherworld below to the heavens above. They were the eastern and western frontiers of the conceptual world where the sun rose and set.⁵⁹⁴ Gilgamesh enquires of the scorpion-guardians the way to Utanapishti. He is instructed by these guardians to take the Path of the Sun (*ḥarrān dšamši*), and after a race of twelve 'double-hours' (*bēru*; alt. 'leagues') through the darkness he comes out ahead of the sun at the other end of the path. When Gilgamesh exits the Path of the Sun he finds himself in a mythical landscape, a place of otherness. He soon encounters the ale-wife, Shiduri, who lives on the edge of the sea-shore. Gilgamesh will continue to the boat-man, Urshanabi, and cross the waters to Utanapishti.⁵⁹⁵

There are various obstacles to a clear understanding of this journey and the conceptual landscape. An easy way out would be to argue that this is a mythical

⁵⁹¹ Cf. *SB Epic*, x.250-253 (George 2003:692-693).

⁵⁹² George 2003:666-675.

⁵⁹³ E.g. *SB Epic*, x.250-253 (George 2003:692-693).

⁵⁹⁴ *SB Epic*, ix.37-47 (George 2003:668-669); Heimpel 1986:140-146; Bottero 2001:78; George 2003:492-493; Horowitz 2011:331-332; *contra* Horowitz (2011:97-100) who understands Māšu to refer to the twin peaks of the one mountain at sunrise. He then conflates these twin peaks with the gate through which the sun emerges.

⁵⁹⁵ *SB Epic*, ix.75-x.211 (George 2003:670-691).

space and that we are not supposed to understand it. I will not attempt to try and dodge the complications in this way, and instead will actually argue for the opposite position. Far from intending to shroud Gilgamesh's journey in mystery, there is a concerted effort in the *Epic* to map it onto the familiar. This is because the scope of his wanderings serves an ideological purpose. Locating the Twins and defining the Path of the Sun are critical requirements in our attempt to understand the significance of the conceptual geography and the attached ideology. It is axiomatic that the mountain of sunrise would lie in the East and that the mountain of sunset would lie to the West. Heimpel has shown that these cosmic mountains of sunrise and sunset were understood to exist beyond the Cedar Mountains to the East and West in Mesopotamian tradition.⁵⁹⁶ Significantly, this presents us with a conceptualised world constructed upon the imperial framework attested elsewhere within the *Epic*. The imperial landscape engaged with and created in the campaign against Humbaba is maintained and revisited. The world is measured from the mountains in the East to those in the West. The Twins themselves lie beyond the scope of the Humbaban campaign, but yet merely represent an extension of this landscape to the mythological limits. As colossal mountains that stretch from the netherworld to the heavens, these Twins are the insurmountable pillars that bookmark the earth.

The *Epic* places Gilgamesh at the mountain of sunrise in the East when he encounters the scorpion guardians before embarking along the Path of the Sun.⁵⁹⁷ This Path of the Sun is the passage of darkness through which Gilgamesh travels during his mythical wanderings. Some scholars have understood the Path of the Sun as a tunnel through the mountain of sunrise.⁵⁹⁸ Horowitz favours a region of perpetual darkness in the distant East or far North.⁵⁹⁹ Both of these theories allow

⁵⁹⁶ Heimpel 1986:140-146.

⁵⁹⁷ *SB Epic*, ix.37-47 (George 2003:698-699).

⁵⁹⁸ Lipinski 1971:49-50; Jacobsen 1976:204; Edzard 1985:52-53; Dalley 2000:97-99; 131 n.101; George 2003:496-497.

⁵⁹⁹ Horowitz 2011:98-100; cf. Woods (2009:198), who sees the Path of the Sun as a land between the mountain of sunrise and the cosmic ocean in the mythological East.

one to translate *bēru* as 'league' and result in a path twelve leagues long.⁶⁰⁰ Heimpel rejects these conceptualisations, due to their inconsistency with the nightly journeys of the sun in Mesopotamian tradition, and instead argues for a corridor between solar poles of sunset and sunrise that takes twelve double-hours to travel along.⁶⁰¹ This alternative conceptualisation of the path is made possible by opting to translate *bēru* as 'double-hour' in this context as opposed to 'league'. The idea of a corridor between the solar poles of East and West is also considered by George, albeit with amendments.⁶⁰² Either translation of *bēru* is possible, but the latter followed by Heimpel and George is preferable.⁶⁰³ Its correlation to the length of the day provides a more elegant connection with the Path of the Sun.⁶⁰⁴ I intend to argue for a conceptualisation of the Path of the Sun in the *Epic* more akin to the corridor discussed by Heimpel and George.

To allow for this corridor between the solar poles, George has argued that there must be a logical error in this part of the *Epic*, which now has Gilgamesh starting at the wrong end of the path. He highlights how the narration of Gilgamesh's race along the Path of the Sun is more coherent if he is understood to advance ahead of the sun along a West-to-East trajectory. As George argues, this explains the constant references to Gilgamesh not being able to see what is behind him as he travels along the path. By repositioning Gilgamesh at the mountain of sunset when he enters the Path of the Sun we are presented with a more coherent race along the path ahead of the sun. Gilgamesh then emerges ahead of the sun at the mountain of sunrise.⁶⁰⁵ George highlights that the eastern trajectory of the final sections of Gilgamesh's mythical wanderings potentially supports this arrangement. This direction of travel beyond the Path of the Sun towards the East is substantiated by the *Epic's* prologue, and the conventional locating of the Flood survivor in

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. George (2003:494-497), who entertains the possibility of a tunnel through the mountain of sunrise, but retains the translation of 'double-hour' for *bēru*.

⁶⁰¹ Heimpel 1986:140-143.

⁶⁰² George 2003:494-496.

⁶⁰³ CAD ii.208.

⁶⁰⁴ Heimpel 1986:142-143; George 2003:495.

⁶⁰⁵ *SB Epic*, ix.37-170 (George 2003:494-495; 668-673).

Mesopotamian tradition in a land towards the rising sun.⁶⁰⁶ This coherent and logical understanding of Gilgamesh's direction of travel in relation to the sun is convincing, as is a conceptualisation of the path stretching between the two solar poles. I would like to suggest a further sophistication of the path that will reconcile all of the details into a coherent cosmology without amending the *Epic*.

We retain Gilgamesh's location at the eastern Twin. His aim was to reach the land of Utanapishti in the distant East beyond the mountain of sunrise, hence his easterly direction of travel and his arrival at the eastern Māšu. Once our protagonist has arrived in the East, he is faced with its limit, the insurmountable Mount Māšu that stretches from the netherworld below to the heavens above.⁶⁰⁷ This conceptually represents the cosmic barrier to the mythological world beyond. Gilgamesh is advised by the scorpion guardians at the gate of sunrise that the only way to access Utanapishti in the land beyond the mountain is to travel the Path of the Sun, and that this is a journey of twelve double-hours.⁶⁰⁸ This length indicates that this is the entire solar path, the full day, the complete cycle. Gilgamesh must travel along the Path of the Sun in its entirety, a journey that the sun completes every twelve double-hours, and so the clock is set for our protagonist. Gilgamesh begins along the Path of the Sun in the East at the mountain of sunrise before the sun has risen.⁶⁰⁹ Crossing from sunrise to sunset along the path just as the sun does daily, continuing along the path from sunset to sunrise, finally emerging from the path on the other side of the mountain of sunrise. He completes the full solar circle (or 11/12 of it) in darkness ahead of the sun. This retains the logical progression along the path argued by George with the sun following behind. It is clearly a race due to the continuous obsession with what is behind our protagonist whilst on the path.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁶ George 2003:495-496; 519-521; *SB Epic*, i.40-42 (George 2003:540-541); *Eridu Genesis*, vi.4-11 (Jacobsen 1981:525); cf. OB VA+BM, col.iv.8-11 (George 2003:280-281).

⁶⁰⁷ *SB Epic*, ix.37-41 (George 2003:668-669).

⁶⁰⁸ *SB Epic*, ix.75-90 (George 2003:670-671).

⁶⁰⁹ Cf. *SB Epic*, ix.8-29 (George 2003:666-669; Woods 2009:197-198).

⁶¹⁰ *SB Epic*, ix.138-170 (George 2003:495; 670-673).

Gilgamesh's cosmological journey beyond the mountain of sunrise is extremely elegant. The use of *bēru* as the unit of measurement offers a sophistication when the journey and the path is conceptualised this way. The 'double-hour' meaning of *bēru* is connected to its usage in the passage of the day and in celestial observation. This is evident from at least the Old Babylonian period onwards, and so is perfectly placed chronologically to appear in the *Epic*. The day and night are divided into twelve equal sections of *bēru* 'double-hours'. These *bēru* each represent thirty degrees of the cosmic circle. In celestial observations, this was the angle a star moved through the sky in one 'double-hour'. Hence, another translation of *bēru* is 'twelfth-part of a circle'.⁶¹¹ Thus each *bēru* that Gilgamesh advances along the path represents a twelfth of the solar circle and takes a double-hour to navigate. He circles around on the sun's celestial journey and comes out on the other side of the mountain of sunrise ready to continue his journey into the mythical East. Logically, this would have conceptually been the only way that the journey beyond the mountain of sunrise could have been made from the earth. The stress is made on the 'other side' of the Twin Mountain at sunrise. Gilgamesh circumvents an insurmountable barrier by going the long way around following the sun's example. It is not currently clear whether Gilgamesh is claimed to have completed the full twelve double-hours, or whether he comes out of the path after the eleventh double-hour. The latter is more logical and so potentially more likely, as this would leave him on the other side of the mountain of sunrise, whereas the final 'double-hour' or thirty degrees would leave him back where he started.⁶¹²

Understanding the Path of the Sun and Gilgamesh's journey along it thus complements the emphasis upon the totality of Gilgamesh's wanderings in the tradition. Gilgamesh has crossed the entire earth in imitation of the sun, totality unrivalled. It is also ideologically loaded with symbolism. Gilgamesh is connected and directly associated with the sun and so Shamash, a common ideological connection for the Mesopotamian monarch evident from the Ur III period into the

⁶¹¹ CAD ii.208; Huxley 1997:195-196. Cf. Horowitz 2011:151-192.

⁶¹² *SB Epic*, ix.169-170 (George 20032:672-673).

First Millennium BCE.⁶¹³ Gilgamesh can be seen to progress into a full solar association. Symbolically, he is becoming the sun of his people by undertaking the solar journey. Gilgamesh's metaphorical connection to the sun, and so Shamash, is an ever present from his arrival at Mount Māšu in the East. The scorpion guardians at the gate of sunrise allow Gilgamesh to enter the Path of Sun, emphasising Gilgamesh's mortal primacy in undertaking this journey.⁶¹⁴ Gilgamesh is embarking on a journey that is normally restricted to the sun. This motif is repeated during Gilgamesh's discourse with Shiduri. The ale-wife tells Gilgamesh that only Shamash can cross the waters to Utanapishti.⁶¹⁵ Yet, like the sun, Gilgamesh continues to reach territory that is normally restricted to the extent of solar campaigning. This has a clear connection with the ideological identification of the Mesopotamian monarch with the sun, Shamash. This cosmological journey of Gilgamesh's appears to represent a metamorphosis in the succession of kingship. The 'successor' in the *Epic* embarks on a journey that elevates him in quite literal terms to a distinctly royal solar association. This prepares him for his role as king, ideological representative of the sun in Mesopotamian kingship. In addition to this, the circular passage of kingship during succession can be symbolically inferred and connected to the sun's cycle. Just like the sun, the kingship descends at the death of the predecessor and is reborn with sunrise of the successor, hence the references to the Mesopotamian monarch as the rising sun.⁶¹⁶ The unconquerable sun and the continuity of kingship are seamlessly connected in the ideology of royal succession in Mesopotamia.

A fragmentary astronomical work from Assurbanipal's library (written in Neo-Babylonian script), which deals with the annual solar movements, demonstrates a continuity of understanding in Mesopotamia regarding this conceptualisation of the Path of the Sun down to the Mid-First Millennium BCE,

⁶¹³ Charpin 2013; Frahm 2013; cf. Tiglath-pileser III's definition of his realm from East to West and to the heights of heaven, providing the 8th century BCE, Neo-Assyrian monarch with a comparable dominion and solar connection to that of Gilgamesh in the *Epic* (Tiglath-pileser III, 47 obv.3-4; 51.3-4; 52.3-4; Tadmor 1994:158; 1999:57; Tadmor & Yamada 2011:118; 136; 138).

⁶¹⁴ *SB Epic*, ix.78-138 (George 2003:670-671).

⁶¹⁵ *SB Epic*, x.78-82 (George 2003:682-683).

⁶¹⁶ Frahm 2013.

*an-nu-ú tal-lak-tú šá^d šamaš ištu ḥarrān šu-ut^d en-líl[!]
 adi ḥarrān šu-ut^d é-a ištu ḥarrān šu-ut^d é-a
 adi ḥarrān šu-ut^d en-líl ištu šīt šamši^{(d}utu.è) adi šamši^{(d}utu.šú.a)
 ištu ereb šamši adi šīt šamši 12 bē^r qaq-qar mi-šiḥ-ti a-sar-ri*

'This is the course of the Sun from the Path of Enlil
 to the Path of Ea, from the Path of Ea
 to the Path of Enlil. From sunrise to sunset,
 from sunset to sunrise, 12 double-hours distance⁶¹⁷ is the measurement of the
 circuit(?)⁶¹⁸.'
 (K 2077 + 3771 + 11044 rev.ii.1-4)⁶¹⁹

Here we have the course of the sun clearly conceptualised in a manner consistent with my understanding of the Path of the Sun in the *Epic*. The sun journeys from sunrise to sunset, from sunset to sunrise, along a circuit of twelve double-hours. This astronomical work also provides a clue of how we may reconcile the final detail of Gilgamesh's journey along the path, the mentioning of the North wind at nine double-hours.⁶²⁰ Instead of indicating a northern direction for the Path of the Sun, it places the path in the North as Gilgamesh travels it. The pertinent consideration is the Paths of Enlil, Anu, and Ea. These paths are a division of the sky through which the stars, planets, etc. travel. The Path of Anu is central, the Path of Ea is to the South, and the Path of Enlil is to the North. When the Path of the Sun is in the Path of Enlil, it relates to a specific time of year, namely the summer. Precisely, this would appear to place Gilgamesh's journey around the Summer Solstice and the month of Tammuz (Dumuzi), which symbolically emphasises the understood association with succession and the death of the king.⁶²¹

Beyond the ideological solar association, Gilgamesh's advance beyond the limits into the mythical landscape is a key component of the journey in an imperial

⁶¹⁷ Note that Horowitz (2011:191-192) translates 12 *bēr qaqqar* as '12 leagues in area'. However, an understanding of *bēr qaqqar* as a measurement of time and distance is more consistent with the rest of the astronomical text (Pingree & Reiner 1974/1977:55). It may also be understood as an astronomical area, so *bēru* as 'double-hour' and 'twelfth-part of a circle' is preferable and maintained; cf. CAD xiii.113-124.

⁶¹⁸ Horowitz (2011:191) suggests 'circuit' as a translation for the unclear *asarru* on the basis of CAD i.2:329-30 (*asarru* A) and the inference of a round shape for the object.

⁶¹⁹ Pingree & Reiner 1974/1977:52; Horowitz 2011:190-191.

⁶²⁰ *SB Epic*, ix.163 (George 2003:672-673).

⁶²¹ See Horowitz (2011:154-174) for the Paths of Anu, Enlil, and Ea, as well as the sun's annual movement between them.

context. Every detail of Gilgamesh's wanderings from the point where he reaches Mount Māšu and the scorpion guardians emphasises that our protagonist is off the map. The special nature and conditions in the environment, paired with the mythical figures encountered serve an emphatic function on this point. Each wonder re-enforces our understanding that our protagonist has now advanced beyond the limits of the human sphere. That Gilgamesh, as a mortal king, does not belong beyond these limits is most elegantly articulated through the surprise and curiosity exhibited by each mythical figure as Gilgamesh approaches.⁶²² The alewife's advice casts doubt upon whether Gilgamesh will even be able to continue beyond this point and make the crossing of the ocean. She demands that if his endeavour fails he must turn back and abandon this violation of the limits.⁶²³ Shiduri is evidently unaware of Gilgamesh's solar parity at this point. By wandering to and beyond the conceptual limits of the mortal world, Gilgamesh not only provides himself with a special status, but reaffirms the imperial limits and consolidates the Mesopotamian world. This understanding is not borne out of ignorance of lands and peoples beyond the frontiers, but from an ideology of totality in the rule of the Mesopotamian monarch.⁶²⁴ As Michalowski summarised in his study of the ideological utilisation of Subartu, in such narratives authors 'used the geographical medium as part of the metaphorical clay used to define and perpetuate certain notions of kingship and state.'⁶²⁵ Therefore, any reality of what lay beyond the borders, or the state's awareness of it, is irrelevant in such narratives as long as it remains outside of its direct control and dominion.

Personally for the figure of Gilgamesh, these mythical wanderings provide an extent of campaign that cannot be surpassed. The abstract pillars of the mountains of sunrise and sunset are moving goalposts that lie outside any subsequent imperial expansion. Gilgamesh's wanderings are seen to take him beyond any possible

⁶²² *Scorpion-guardians* (*SB Epic*, ix.48-59; George 2003:668-669); *Shiduri* (*SB Epic*, x.5-28; George 2003:678-679); and *Utanapishti* (*SB Epic*, x.184-203; George 2003:688-691). Urshanabi is unaware of Gilgamesh's advance and is surprised by the attack of our protagonist, however, he still demonstrates curiosity concerning Gilgamesh's journey (*SB Epic*, x.92-118; cf. OB VA+BM, col.iv.4-13; George 2003:280-281; 684-685).

⁶²³ *SB Epic*, x.78-91 (George 2003:682-685).

⁶²⁴ Woods 2009:194-202; cf. Liverani 1979; 1990.

⁶²⁵ Michalowski 1986:145.

imperial frontier and beyond these conceptual world limits. He ventures into the mythical and divine sphere. This positions Gilgamesh as an archetypal world-conqueror and one who cannot be outmatched in this measurement of kingship.⁶²⁶

This is a significant point for the assessment of Gilgamesh's kingship.

Mesopotamian kingship was a contest with each subsequent king tasked to go further and do more than those who had come before. In a practical sense this entails extending the imperial world by advancing the frontiers.⁶²⁷ This measuring stick for one's kingship is clearly demonstrated by the Sargonic challenge in *Sargon, the Conquering Hero*,

šar-ru-ki-[i]n um-ma-tam ú-na-ḥa-ad
a-ga-n[a š]ar-rum ša i-ša-a[n-na]-na-an-ni
ša a-na-ku at-ta-al-[a]-k[u]
šu-ú li-it-ta-la-ak

'Sargon instructs the troops:

"Lo, the king who wants to equal me,
where I have gone,
let him also go!"

(*Sargon, the Conquering Hero*, 120-123)⁶²⁸

The tablet which contains this Sargonic narrative is from the Old Babylonian period, but the sentiment may plausibly go back to the Akkadian period of its protagonist.⁶²⁹ As discussed in chapter two, the exact relationship of influence between traditions centred upon Gilgamesh and those upon Sargon cannot be unpicked with confidence. Nevertheless, it appears that both archetypal kings have their respective claims to superlative kingship measured comparably in the Old Babylonian period (cf. 'OB prologue' to the *Epic* quoted above). Gilgamesh is ultimately understood to have campaigned as extensively as it is possible to do. His wanderings span the reach of the sun itself and provide him with unassailable imperial frontiers. His journey along the Path of the Sun provides him with a superlative advance. It is not just from sunset to sunrise, but beyond. These limits

⁶²⁶ Note that after Gilgamesh departs, the boat-man is banished by Utanapishti so that no one can follow in Gilgamesh's footsteps (*SB Epic*, xi.247-249; George 2003:718-719; 522); cf. the impossible nature of the journey across the sea in the first place (*SB Epic*, x.78-86; George 2003:682-683)

⁶²⁷ See Tadmor (1999) for this ideological requirement in Assyrian kingship.

⁶²⁸ Cf. *Sargon Birth Legend*, 13-31; Westenholz 1997:40-45; 76-77.

⁶²⁹ Westenholz 1997:59-61.

and the advance beyond them are carefully narrated in the *Epic*, so that it is clear to the audience that no other king had reached them before, and that it was not possible for a king to follow in Gilgamesh's footsteps.

6.2.2 Gilgamesh's acquisition of knowledge

The second function of Gilgamesh's wanderings is narrated a lot more overtly and is much easier to explain. Gilgamesh is lectured by Utanapishti about his actions, and he is presumably instructed upon how he should be acting as king (tablet X is fragmentary here, but it is possible that this special knowledge is never disclosed to the audience).⁶³⁰ Utanapishti then tells Gilgamesh the story of the Deluge.⁶³¹ This combined dialogue with Utanapishti is a significant part of the *Epic* and represents Gilgamesh's well attested acquisition/retrieval of antediluvian knowledge in the tradition.⁶³² This is not only a boon for mankind, but it enables Gilgamesh to rule as a king in a manner that the gods demand. He is instructed upon the appropriate rites in relation to the gods and is able to return this knowledge to humanity.⁶³³ Gilgamesh acquires the quintessential knowledge of kingship and becomes the conduit between heaven and earth. This complements the geographical knowledge of the limits and the cosmos that the extent of his wanderings imbeds.⁶³⁴ Thus

⁶³⁰ *SB Epic*, x.266-322 (George 2003:694-699).

⁶³¹ *SB Epic*, xi.8-206 (George 2003:702-717).

⁶³² *DG*, M 52-61; 143-152 (George 1999:198-199; 202; Cavigneaux & Al-Rawi 2000:27; 30-31; 56); *SB Epic*, i.1-10; 37-46 (George 2003:538-541; cf. George 2007b:239-241).

⁶³³ Cf. Berossus (F3; F4a), who alternatively accredits the restoration of antediluvian knowledge to Chaldaean companions of Xisouthros, who also survive the Flood, but afterwards return to Babylonia and retrieve the tablets of knowledge for mankind (Verbrugghe and Wickersham 1996:46-50).

⁶³⁴ Cf. *SB Epic of Etana* for another Mesopotamian tradition that narrates the re-instruction of kingship after the Flood. This provides the protagonist king, Etana, with knowledge of the limits and cosmic order, as well as a divine model for his earthly rule. A brief summary would be as follows: Kish is built by the gods as the first city after the Flood; kingship will be sent down from heaven to Kish; Etana is selected as the king (*SB Etana*, i.1-30; Kinnier Wilson 1985:82-85; Dalley 2000:190-191; cf. SKL, i.40-ii.22; Jacobsen 1939:76-81); he undertakes his flight to the heavens on the back of the eagle in search of the plant of birth; during this flight Etana is encouraged to look down by the eagle and as such gains perspective and knowledge of the limits of the earth (*SB Etana*, iii/iv; Kinnier Wilson 1985:108-121; Dalley 2000:197-200; Horowitz 2011:45-53; 56-57; 60-65); Etana's experience of the divine kingdoms in his dreams and his 'second' flight provides him with the divinely harmonious model for earthly kingship (*SB Etana*, iii/iv; Kinnier Wilson 1985:108-113; 120-123; Dalley 2000:199-200; Horowitz 2011:50-55; 58-60). With this journey completed, Etana is ready to rule and Mesopotamian kingship is restored after the Flood. Again, it is conspicuous that the journey ideologically required of the protagonist king, to prepare him for kingship, is likewise motivated in

imbued, Gilgamesh is dispatched back to Uruk by Utanapishti to take up his mantle as king. Conspicuously, Utanapishti has Urshanabi cleanse and enrobe Gilgamesh before allowing them to depart. Gilgamesh sheds the dirt and animal skins that have adorned him on his wanderings thus far and is decked out in spotless royal attire for his return to Uruk as king. We are informed that these robes will remain spotless and brand new until Gilgamesh arrives back in Uruk.⁶³⁵ Through this action the kingship is symbolically renewed and thus returns to the city anew. Note that this is a return from the East, emphasising the association between the new monarch and the rising sun. Once Gilgamesh arrives back in Uruk, he surveys the walls, details the layout of his royal abode (Uruk) to the attendant Urshanabi, and the eleven-tablet *Epic* closes with our protagonist as king in his capital ready to rule in harmony with the gods.⁶³⁶

Between Gilgamesh's adorning in kingly attire at the command of Utanapishti and our protagonist's arrival back in Uruk, there is a passage that in many ways feels like an interpolation. This is Gilgamesh's descent down to the Apsû to obtain the plant of rejuvenation. This episode exists in a hollow and uncomfortable narrative space within tablet XI. Gilgamesh has been ceremonially dressed as king and is dispatched back to Uruk now that he is ready to rule in harmony with the gods. Once departed, he is called back in what feels like a clumsy insertion of the plant of rejuvenation and snake episode. Gilgamesh is offered a consolation prize for his failed bid for immortality, a plant that will renew his youth. This is presented as recompense for all that he has suffered to undertake his mythical journey. Utanapishti, at the behest of his wife, informs Gilgamesh of the plant's existence and location in the Deep. Gilgamesh descends, retrieves the plant, intends to test it before using it once back in Uruk, he is subsequently relieved of the plant en route back to Uruk by the snake, and returns to his city absent his consolation.⁶³⁷ In the context of tablet XI, and the *Epic* in general, this episode of plant and snake appears to amount to

search of a mythological source of continuity. Cf. Alster 1989; Horowitz 1990; 2011:43-66; 411-412; Kinnier Wilson 2007.

⁶³⁵ *SB Epic*, xi.250-270 (George 2003:718-721).

⁶³⁶ *SB Epic*, xi.322-328 (George 2003:724-725).

⁶³⁷ *SB Epic*, xi.273-318 (George 2003:720-723).

catalysis.⁶³⁸ Removing it from the story changes little, and we are not left with the difficulty of how a fully robed Gilgamesh descended to the Deep and then departed ceremonially spotless to Uruk.⁶³⁹

That this episode belongs to the *SB Epic* is clear from its attested existence in multiple fragments of tablet XI and the reference to this scene in the prologue.⁶⁴⁰ However, whether it was part of the earlier *OB Epic* is not so secure. The uncomfortable fit of this episode within the narrative of ceremonial dressing and procession back to Uruk, along with the shorter prologue absent the reference to the episode, seems to indicate that it may not have been part of an earlier OB format.⁶⁴¹ Despite this possibility, it does not simply amount to a clumsy insertion of a narrative about a plant and a snake, nor is it a wholesale diversion from the themes and plot. Upon further inspection, this episode complements the overall theme of Gilgamesh's wanderings. Again the dominant motifs overpower the episode. Gilgamesh is required to descend to enhance his knowledge and the extent of his wanderings. By reaching the Apsû, Gilgamesh is understood to have seen and to know everything. The *SB Epic* prologue is quite explicit on this point. The utilisation of the ambiguous word *nagbu* (meaning either 'totality/all' or 'the deep underground waters/Apsû') in these opening lines only serves to emphasise the point.⁶⁴² The Apsû, the cosmic waters from which everything stems are visited by our protagonist providing totality at source. In addition to this, he experiences the foundation of the conceptual world by descending to the Apsû, enhancing his special knowledge and providing Gilgamesh with a true knowledge of how things originally were and so should be.⁶⁴³ Once again, Gilgamesh is seen to undertake a

⁶³⁸ i.e. a satellite episode not logically essential to the narrative action (Prince 1987:11).

⁶³⁹ Cf. Veenker (1981), who also considered this episode to be an interpolation. However, I am not convinced by Veenker's argument that this episode was employed to explain the long-lived antediluvians.

⁶⁴⁰ *SB Epic*, i.1-4; xi.273-318 (George 2003:538-539; 720-723; cf. George 2007b:239-241).

⁶⁴¹ *SB Epic*, xi.247-328 (George 2003:718-725); for *OB Epic* beginning at l.29 of the *SB Epic's* prologue, see George (2003:23; 29).

⁶⁴² CAD xi.108-111. See Castillo (1998) and George (2003:444-445) on the use and meaning of *nagbu* in these opening lines. I am inclined to follow George's suggestion that both meanings are meant.

⁶⁴³ This is ideologically connected to claims made by Mesopotamian monarchs when carrying out their kingly duty of temple and sacred boundary restorations. The idea is that a pure understanding of how things were originally ordered by the gods is derived from reaching the true foundations.

journey ideologically necessary for his kingship, motivated by a desire to delay death. The device of a pseudo-motive in an immature protagonist is again utilised to take our protagonist king exactly where he needs to go.

Finally, the plant of rejuvenation also serves another function which complements this contextualisation of Gilgamesh's wanderings. This is because it would have enabled Gilgamesh to complete his narrative costume of the 'successor' by returning him to Uruk fresh faced and new. Alas, our protagonist delays in taking advantage of this boon and loses it. This was perhaps inevitable as Gilgamesh's liminality, which was brought about by the narrative shift of Enkidu to the role of king at the point of his death, is shattered and departs with the snake and the plant. Gilgamesh is now back where he started before the narrative shift of tablet VII. Therefore, it appears clear from the above argument that Gilgamesh's wanderings served to fulfil the ideological markers of kingship, enabling the metamorphosis of the 'successor' to a position of kingly knowledge and stature. His association with the gods and the ratification of his accession and rule are evident through such achievements beyond the possible. With this established, I will now move on to Alexander's mythical wanderings of accession, their connection to the Gilgamesh model, and a comparable contextualisation of the episode.

6.3.1 Alexander's mythical wanderings of accession

This is where parallels between the narrative traditions of Gilgamesh and Alexander have been identified and argued for previously in scholarship. Although some similarities had been noted in passing, it was Meissner who first presented a detailed treatment of the case.⁶⁴⁴ Meissner understood Gilgamesh's search for immortality in the *Epic* to be the Babylonian model for Alexander's mythical journey in search of life in the *First Miracle Letter* of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, the *Syriac*

Consider the First Millennium BCE examples of rebuilding Babylon by Esarhaddon (Babylon A, iii.35-iv.1; Leichty 2011:197-198) and the restoration of Imgur-Enlil at Babylon by Nabopolassar (ii.37-41; Al-Rawi 1985:4-6). Cf. Winter 2000; Roaf 2013:340-341.

⁶⁴⁴ Meissner 1894. For earlier comments on the similarity see, for example, Jeremias 1887:89fn.1.

Alexander Legend, and the *Syriac Metric Homily*.⁶⁴⁵ He highlighted conspicuous topographical parallels between the protagonists' wanderings in their respective traditions (see further below). In addition to these parallels in landscape, Meissner identified the parallel presence of a device for cheating death (i.e. Plant of Rejuvenation/Fountain of Life). He went on to point out that Alexander and Gilgamesh were even companions in failure, as neither king actually achieved immortality as a result of their comparable expeditions.⁶⁴⁶ This is a significant contribution, as Meissner established that the comparable mythical journeys are not only connected by a common theme, but also by a common outcome in relation to this theme (i.e. immortality lost).⁶⁴⁷ It has thus been understood in scholarship since as early as Meissner's study that structural similarities and a complex collection of parallels in content, landscape, and theme exist between the mythical wanderings of our subject protagonists.

Henkelman has recently revisited Meissner's thesis to re-state and expand the argument.⁶⁴⁸ This was partly in response to the marginalisation and rejection of the significance of Meissner's parallels in subsequent studies by Friedlaender and Stoneman.⁶⁴⁹ Friedlaender argued that the parallels between the mythical wanderings of Alexander and Gilgamesh were too general, that they were widespread in antiquity, and so similarities should be understood as the result of indirect influence rather than direct emulation.⁶⁵⁰ Friedlaender understood the 'Fountain of Life' scene to be central to the analysis and understanding of Alexander's mythical wanderings in their entirety. This is a precarious position to adopt, as it represents a single scene in the wanderings and is only overtly stated as

⁶⁴⁵ For the *Syriac Alexander Legend* (hereafter *SyrLeg*) and for the *Syriac Metric Homily* (hereafter *SyrHom*) see Budge (1889:144-158; 163-200).

⁶⁴⁶ Meissner 1894:11-18.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Henkelman 2010:351; *contra* Stoneman 1992:98-99.

⁶⁴⁸ Henkelman's (2010) study is extremely useful for the analysis of the comparisons between the two traditions at this point. He provides a summary of the main contributions of scholarship on the topic to-date (pp.334-343; Wheeler 1998; 2002:26-31 should be added to this summary); he tabulates the parallels argued for initially by Meissner (p.335); and he tabulates the parallels between the *First Miracle Letter* and *SyrHom* (pp.329-334).

⁶⁴⁹ Friedlaender 1910; 1913; Stoneman 1992; 2008:152-154.

⁶⁵⁰ Friedlaender 1910:195-198; followed by Jouanno 2002:269; cf. Pfister (1913b) for an early defence of Meissner's argument against Friedlaender's objections.

the target in the *SyrHom*.⁶⁵¹ Friedlaender did however convincingly argue for the influence of the Greek Glaucus myth upon this scene within the *First Miracle Letter* in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives.⁶⁵² The creation of sea-deity (Alexander's cook) does bear striking similarities with the Glaucus myth, as does the engagement with the tragedy of immortality.⁶⁵³ Friedlaender's study serves to remind us that there are multiple threads of intertextuality and influence running through each episode and possibly every scene, however the identification of plausible Glaucus parallels is complementary and should in no way be understood as preclusive of any Gilgamesh parallels (especially when they are concentrated upon a single scene within Alexander's mythical wanderings).

Stoneman, like Friedlaender before, rejected Meissner's argument opting for a different set of narratives behind the fantastical scenes in this episode of *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. He claimed that all of the antecedents for Alexander's mythical wanderings in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives could be found in the Greek, Egyptian, and Graeco-Roman cultural milieus, ultimately dismissing any connection with Gilgamesh and Mesopotamia.⁶⁵⁴ Henkelman's response to this was to reassert Meissner's argument sacrificing what he considered to be insecure parallels, such as the scorpion-guardians,⁶⁵⁵ but defending parallels such as those concerning the

⁶⁵¹ *SyrHom* (150-161; Budge 1889:171-172); note that even in this narrative Alexander's 'true' motives (i.e. reaching the Fountain of Life) are not revealed until they draw near the Land of Darkness. Cf. Wheeler 2002:27; Anderson 2012:84-85.

⁶⁵² For the Glaucus myth, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* xiii.898-968; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, vii.296a-297b. Friedlaender (1913) also understood the Islamic Chadhir legend to have its origins in the Greek Glaucus myth with the comparable episodes in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, the *Babylonian Talmud*, and the *SyrHom* representing intermediaries and alternative versions. Note Lidzbarski (1892) had previously argued for identifying Chadhir in the Quran (18.59-81) with the Mesopotamian flood hero, arguing for a connection between the *Nimrod Epic* (Gilgamesh), the Alexander tradition, the *Babylonian Talmud*, and the traditions of the Islamic hero, Chadhir (also, Wensinck 1978); cf. Wheeler (1998; 2002:10-36) who reconsiders Wensinck's argument for the relationship between the Quran (18.60-82) and the Alexander narratives, but clearly accepts the connection between the Gilgamesh and Alexander traditions at this point. Also, see Zuwiyya 2001; Henkelman (2010:334-335:fn.52); and Doufikar-Aerts (2010).

⁶⁵³ Friedlaender 1913:28-34.

⁶⁵⁴ Stoneman 1992; 2008:152-154.

⁶⁵⁵ Stoneman's (1992:99; followed by Jouanno 2002:269 and Henkelman 2010:351n106) rejection of the scorpion-guardians parallel does Meissner's study a great disservice. For Meissner (1894:14) it is not simply the saw-handed beasts of *Pseudo-Callisthenes* that occupy the role of the scorpion-guardians of the *Epic*, but also significantly the old men in the *SyrHom* who try to dissuade Alexander from penetrating the land of darkness, as it entails a treacherous 12-day journey to the great

device for cheating death that had been rejected by Stoneman.⁶⁵⁶ Henkelman critically added structural parallels to our understanding, arguing for immortality twice denied in both traditions and connecting the conspicuous placement of Darius' death in the *First Miracle Letter* with the positioning of Enkidu's death in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.⁶⁵⁷ Henkelman then reached a 'Friedlaenderesque' conclusion dismissing a direct connection between the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the 'Alexander Romance' tradition, instead hypothesising an intermediary tradition and a web of oral transmission concerning the Mesopotamian motifs common to both traditions.⁶⁵⁸

Therefore, much of what is required has already been achieved. There is no need or desire to repeat the work of others wholesale, parallels have been identified and established. It is then left to establish a more direct connection between the traditions for this episode and re-contextualise them in a comparable engagement with Mesopotamian kingship ideology. This is what will occupy the remainder of the present chapter. I will discuss the topographical parallels and comparable conceptual landscapes identified by Meissner, highlighting commonality and variation between the two traditions. The Mesopotamian ideological conceptualisation of the world had evolved beyond the *Epic* by the time of Alexander, and the Alexander tradition exhibits parallels both with the world of the *Epic* and more recent Mesopotamian world views. This is significant as it indicates that it is not solely the emulation of Gilgamesh that is evident, but an engagement with a common Mesopotamian royal ideology. I will demonstrate that Alexander likewise campaigns to and beyond the limits of the inhabited world in his tradition,

mountain. There is obviously a strong case for accepting this parallel. Cf. *SB Epic*, ix.37-138 (George 2003:668-671); *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.32 (Stoneman 2012:128-129; 216-217); *SyrHom*, 119-141 (Budge 1889:169-171).

⁶⁵⁶ Henkelman 2010:351-352. Both Henkelman and Anderson (2012:84) have defended this parallel arguing that the switch from plant to water was likely the result of cultural impact. Cf. *Inanna's Descent*, 224-226; 279-281 (Sladek 1974:131; 137-138; 170; 174), where Enki utilises a plant and water in unison to restore vitality (also see *Lugalbanda I*, 264-270; Vanstiphout 2003:118-119; 161). It should then be noted that Gilgamesh sources his Plant of Rejuvenation from the Apsû (aka Enki's cosmic waters); *SB Epic*, xi.278-293 (George 2003:720-723; cf. Henkelman 2010:351). Therefore, *contra* Stoneman (1992:99; 2008:153), vitality from water and/or a plant does not even constitute an irreconcilable difference within Mesopotamian tradition.

⁶⁵⁷ Henkelman 2010:350-353.

⁶⁵⁸ Henkelman 2010:354-355.

providing him with a comparable and competitive claim to superlative kingship. This is achieved in a comparable way to Gilgamesh's own claim through a conceptualisation of totality on par with solar campaigning. Finally, we will consider Alexander's own maturation to kingly knowledge through this episode, preparing the new king to rule. All of this serves to legitimise Alexander as the rightful and god-chosen successor to the position of hegemonic king. However, before we embark upon these matters it will prove pertinent to expand the case for understanding a more direct relationship between our two subject traditions, and to demonstrate the necessity of a methodological revision when approaching the assessment of parallels between the two traditions for this episode.

6.3.2 Expanding the case for a more direct relationship

Firstly, concerning a more direct relationship between the traditions, I evidently agree for the most part with Meissner's and Henkelman's respective arguments for parallels between the two traditions. However, I contend that the direct relationship assumed by Meissner is much more tangible now than it has been previously.⁶⁵⁹ This is in no small amount due to the argument of this thesis up to this point. Further parallels in differing areas have been identified and demonstrated through their analysis as comparable Humbaban campaigns have become evident. In addition to this, the connected primary episode structure concerning the death of the king ahead of the mythical wanderings of accession has been clearly laid out. It is now clear that Mesopotamian kingship is the common feature that has dictated the similarities and that the influence is evidently far more direct than has previously been understood. Despite this, we are still left with the possibility that it was not Gilgamesh himself that was specifically emulated, but instead simply one of many possible Mesopotamian predecessors to Alexander who likewise engaged with the Gilgamesh tradition (e.g. Assurbanipal and/or Nebuchadnezzar II). This is a reality that cannot be removed from the debate and

⁶⁵⁹ Meissner 1894:11-12; 18.

should remain an ever present consideration. However, the likelihood of direct influence is becoming harder to dismiss.

The early Seleucid period provides us with a very narrow period within living memory of Alexander where all of the relevant material and the appropriate circumstances existed for direct influence to have occurred between the *Gilgamesh* and Alexander traditions. One could even argue for a more acute period of 11 years with the co-regency providing us with a very specific bracket where the respective narratives from each of our subject traditions are evident in the same time and space (292-281 BCE). I have shown above that the *First Miracle Letter* and Alexander's mythical wanderings at this point in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives indicate an underlying Seleucid source which can be placed with a degree of confidence within the period of the co-regency. We can even more securely date a tablet of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to the co-regency of Seleucus and Antiochus. This not only places both narratives in the same time and place, but significantly it is Tablet X which bears the co-regency date in the colophon.⁶⁶⁰ Thus it is not just the narratives co-existing, but the specific episodes that detail the comparable wanderings.

When this is combined with the production of Berossos' *Babyloniaca* in the third year of Antiochus' reign (so either during the co-regency or very shortly afterwards), the *Antiochus Cylinder* which presents Antiochus I as the Mesopotamian monarch in the traditional cylinder inscription format, a chronicle from shortly before the co-regency which details the crown prince, Antiochus, carrying out Babylonian cult practice under the instruction of a Babylonian, and the continuing presentation of Alexander and Seleucids in traditional Mesopotamian monarchical mediums during the Seleucid period, we are left with a period and location where these parallels can be securely placed and understood.⁶⁶¹ Further,

⁶⁶⁰ MS f (George 2003:740).

⁶⁶¹ Berossos, *Babyloniaca*, T7 (Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:38-39); *Antiochus Cylinder* (Kuhrt & Sherwin-White 1991); *Chronicle from the time of Antiochus I, crown prince* (Glassner 2004:no.32; 248-251); cf. Sherwin-White 1983. A notable example of this continuing practice is the *Uruk King List*, which presents Alexander and the Seleucids, in a traditional Mesopotamian format, in a list of

the existence of figures such as Berossos, who had the language skills and desire for the continuity of Mesopotamian culture, mean that language and circumstances are quite simply not barriers to the parallels. As the highlighted Seleucid chronicle and the Graeco-Babyloniaca (see chapter two) clearly demonstrate, Berossos was not an isolated phenomenon. There was clearly dialogue and access between Akkadian material and the Greek language.

Therefore, one could reasonably expect the model and deeds of Gilgamesh to be accessible to those constructing the new Mesopotamian-style kingship narratives centralising on Alexander. It is very likely that as Alexander's story was crafted and told, it took on, emulated, and endeavoured to surpass the local superlative model represented by the figure of Gilgamesh. This is clearly evident in the case study of the mythical wanderings beyond the limits. We have already seen above that Gilgamesh represented the Mesopotamian model for such an expedition and that the *Epic* presents an extent of wanderings for our archetypal Mesopotamian monarch that is conceptually unsurpassable. It is also purported, through a narrative device in the *Epic* providing its contents with unrivalled authority, that Gilgamesh left a record of all he went through,

[a-mur?] ^{giš}tup-šen-na šá ^{giš}erēni (erin)
 [pu-uṭ-ṭe]r? ḥar-gal-li-šu šá siparri(zabar)
 [pi-te-m]a? bāba(ká) šá ni-ṣir-ti-šú
 [i-š]i?-ma ṭup-pi ^{na4}uqni(za.gìn) ši-tas-si
 [mim-m]u-ú ^dGIŠ-gim-maš ittallaku(DU.DU) ^{ku}ka-lu mar-ša-a-ti

'[Find] the tablet-box of cedar,
 [release] its clasps of bronze!
 [Open] the lid of its secret,
 [lift] up the tablet of lapis lazuli and read out
 all the misfortunes, all that Gilgamesh went through!
 (SB *Epic*, i.24-28)⁶⁶²

This provides a conceptual explanation of how the information in the *Epic* was transmitted and how the secret knowledge unique to Gilgamesh may be transmitted to successors, at least in part. An aspect of this knowledge is the

Babylonian kings significantly going back to 7th century BCE and plausibly Assurbanipal (Borger 1974-1977; Grayson 1980-1983:97-98).

⁶⁶² George 2003:538-539.

mythical wanderings that occupy Tablets IX-XI of the *SB Epic*. Gilgamesh is then the conceptual source and transmitter of this knowledge of the other space, the land beyond, as well as a retriever of lost/latent knowledge.

Such circumstances in the Gilgamesh tradition naturally engender a comparison with a miracle letter from the Alexander tradition that appears to have remained regrettably absent from the discussion to-date. In this letter Alexander is not the author or the narrator, nor is the narrated content a recounting of his own experiences. He is instead presented as the discoverer and transmitter by proxy of the special knowledge uncovered. The letter to which I refer to is the one fictitiously attributed to Balagrus by Antonius Diogenes in his narrative, *The Incredible Things beyond Thule*.⁶⁶³ Diogenes tells us that at the end of Alexander's siege of Tyre, as the city was aflame, a soldier took Alexander and a select group of companions to a rock-cut tomb outside the city. The tomb was supposedly that of Diogenes' protagonist, Dinias. Here Alexander discovered a box of cypress-wood, which contained the account of Dinias' wonderful adventures inscribed on cypress-wood tablets. The box bore the following inscription,

ῥΩ ξένε, ὅστις εἶ, ἀνοιξον, ἵνα μάθῃς ἃ θαυμάζεις

'Stranger, whoever you are, open this box to learn what will amaze you.'
(Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 111b:21-22 [cod.166])⁶⁶⁴

Diogenes presents the contents of these tablets as if they were being related in a letter by Alexander's bodyguard, Balagrus, to his wife, Phila.⁶⁶⁵ This Phila was the daughter of Antipater and later became the wife of Demetrius Poliorcetes.

Demetrius and Phila are the parents of Stratonice I, the Seleucid queen in their turn of both our co-regents, Seleucus I and Antiochus I.⁶⁶⁶ This purportedly places the

⁶⁶³ For Antonius Diogenes' *The Incredible Things beyond Thule*, see the summary in Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 109a:5-112a:12 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:140-149; Sandy 1989); cf. Stephens & Winkler (1995:101-178) for collated fragments, summary, and testimonies.

⁶⁶⁴ Henry 1960:148; Cf. Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 111a:20-29 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:146); cf. Sandy 1989:781-782; Stephens & Winkler 1995:127.

⁶⁶⁵ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 111a:41-111b:31 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:147-148); cf. Sandy 1989:782; Stephens & Winkler 1995:127-128. For Balagrus/Balacrus, see Arrian, *Anab.* ii.12.2; Diod. xviii.22.1.

⁶⁶⁶ Plut. *Demetrius*, 14.2; 31.3; 38; 53.4. Cf. *Antiochus Cylinder*, ii.21-29 for Antiochus and Stratonice (Kuhrt and Sherwin-White 1991:76-77).

letter within Alexander's lifetime and the knowledge of its contents within the early Hellenistic cultural milieu. Now I am not suggesting that this letter actually existed, even in fictional form. It is clearly a construction of Diogenes to lend authority to his narrative, whilst the contained adventures of Dinias appear to be the author's creation.⁶⁶⁷ However, it is also clear that Diogenes has been inspired or influenced by the Alexander tradition and its genre of miracle letters.

This is significant for a number of reasons, but I will limit myself to a couple of demonstrative points. Firstly, it is the date of Diogenes' narrative. Although we cannot currently be certain of an exact date, it is certainly before 200 CE due to the existence of two fragments assigned to approximately this time. Further debated fragments may securely drag the date down to before c.150 BCE.⁶⁶⁸ Attempts to locate the author himself through a Roman citizen family attested in Aphrodisias, and the identification of the referenced, Faustinus, with the patron of Martial, have even led to the argument of a date c.98-110 CE.⁶⁶⁹ This seems to securely place this type of miracle letter and adventure beyond the limits in connection with Alexander ahead of comparable narratives of wondrous journeys such as Lucian's *True Histories*, which do not form part of the Alexander tradition, but appear to owe a debt to it.⁶⁷⁰ Secondly, Diogenes' narrative contributes to the case for placing this specific kind of wonder narrative (beyond the limits) in connection with Alexander in the early Hellenistic period, an understanding that is now very difficult to argue against due to the weight of evidence in its favour (including the above argument

⁶⁶⁷ Cf. Ní Mheallaigh 2008.

⁶⁶⁸ *PSI* 1177; P. Oxy. 3012; P. Dubl. C3; and P. Mich. inv. 5 (Stephens & Winkler 1995:148-178); cf. Bowie 2002:58; Stephens 2003a:678-680.

⁶⁶⁹ Bowersock 1994a:37-40; Bowie 2002:58-60; Tilg 2010:126-127. For Faustinus, see Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 111a:30-34 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:147); Martial, *Epigrams*, iii.2; iv.10; *PIR*² F 127; and for the Roman citizen family bearing the *nomen* Antonius and the *cognomen* Diogenes, see *PIR*² C 853; *IAph2007* 13.604 (cf. Jones & Smith 1994:461-472). Note the additional *nomen* 'Flavius' attested in *IAph2007* 13.604 indicates that a member of family achieved citizen status during the Flavian period.

⁶⁷⁰ Photius (*Bibliotheca*, 111b:32-42 [cod.166]; Henry 1960:148; cf. Sandy 1989:782) believed that Lucian's *True Histories* and other similar Graeco-Roman wonder narratives owed a debt to Diogenes' narrative. Morgan (1985) argued against the identification of this relationship by Photius and its acceptance in scholarship, but Anderson (2003:556-559; cf. Bowie 2002:58-59) has since highlighted the flawed case put forward by Morgan in absence of Diogenes' full narrative.

for a Seleucid source, dated to the co-regency, underlying the *First Miracle Letter* in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*).⁶⁷¹

We are then left to consider the extent of the debt Diogenes' narrative owes to the Alexander tradition. It overtly takes its inspiration concerning the type of narrative and mythical journeying of its protagonist from traditions connected with Alexander. It also borrows authority and aspects of structure from the miracle letters of the Alexander tradition, but there are further conspicuous details in Diogenes' narrative that imply an even greater reliance. Diogenes' Thule is a frontier place in *The Incredible Things beyond Thule*.⁶⁷² It marks the end of the normal space and the entrance to the other space of wonders. However, Diogenes' Thule appears to be in the East towards the quarter of the rising sun.⁶⁷³

Conventionally, following Pytheas, Thule appears to have been located to the Northwest.⁶⁷⁴ This would appear to present us with two Thules attested in antiquity. Geminus of Rhodes adds a significant detail to our understanding of this existence of two Thules, when he states that the western Thule was located where the sun sets.⁶⁷⁵ Thus we have a Thule attested at sunset and one towards sunrise. A comparable conceptual geography to that identified for the Māšū Mountains in the Gilgamesh tradition comes into view with mirrored border locations that bookmark the sun, and that mark the end of the normal space and the beginning of the mythical lands beyond. Having reached this island of Thule, Diogenes subsequently has his protagonist, Dinias, venture beyond encountering wonders and

⁶⁷¹ Cf. Merkelbach (1977:62-65; 70-72) who also assigned the contents of the *First Miracle Letter* to the Hellenistic Period. He also highlights the presence of comparable themes concerning Alexander's campaigning in Curtius (iv.8.3; 10.3; ix.4.18) and Seneca the Elder (*Suasoriae*, i.2; *Controversiae*, vii.7.19). Also see, Gunderson (1980:83-86); Van Thiel (1983:185); and Henkelman (2010:327; 353).

⁶⁷² This is consistent with the conceptualisation of Thule in Virgil, *Georgics*, i.29-31 and Seneca, *Medea*, 375-379. Cf. Romm 1992:121-171.

⁶⁷³ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 109a:13-25 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:141); cf. Sandy 1989:777-778; Stephens & Winkler 1995:122-123. Note that Stephens and Winkler have maintained Thule's north-western location in Diogenes' narrative by taking considerable licence in interpreting the Greek in Photius' summary.

⁶⁷⁴ E.g. Strabo, *Geography*, ii.4.1; Pliny, *NH*, ii.77; Tacitus, *Agricola*, 10; cf. Whitaker 1981/82:150; 153-154.

⁶⁷⁵ *Elementa astronomiae*, vi.9; cf. Whitaker 1981/82:155.

regions/periods of darkness.⁶⁷⁶ It would then appear that it is not only the direction of travel and conceptual geography that aligns with the pertinent details present in the Gilgamesh tradition, but also the narration of the mythical space beyond bears similarities.

These would be startling parallels in their own right, but a conspicuous connection with Tyre is also evident throughout. Dinias' love interest and her brother are from Tyre, the story ends at Tyre with Dinias appearing to awake from mythical wanderings in the Temple of Herakles (leaving one to consider whether he undertook his mythical journey at all), and Alexander uncovers Dinias' tomb and his tablet-box on the outskirts of Tyre after he had taken the city.⁶⁷⁷ This affinity with Tyre in Diogenes' narrative cannot be understood as simply coincidental when considered in the light of the demonstrated connection between Tyre and the Gilgamesh tradition, whilst the location and timing of this discovery by Alexander is extremely difficult to ignore. As I have demonstrated in chapter four, the capture of Tyre ideologically signalled the divine sanction for Alexander's ascension to hegemonic kingship. His subsequent and immediate discovery of a coniferous wooden box containing tablets detailing wonders beyond the limits comparable to parts of the *Epic* is exciting. The cedar box and lapis lazuli tablets claimed by the *Epic of Gilgamesh* come to mind, and the sentiments of the instruction of the *Epic* and inscription on Dinias' cypress-box are not irreconcilable. Even Diogenes' protagonist, Dinias, bears superficial similarities as he is presented as living to 125 years old and coming from Arcadia.⁶⁷⁸ One could tentatively consider this in relation to the 126 years that the *SKL* claims Gilgamesh ruled for and the designation of a portion of Mesopotamia as the land of Akkad.⁶⁷⁹ It is plausible that a 'Gilgamesh-esque' figure has been Hellenised by Diogenes, creating the Dinias who takes centre stage in *The Incredible Things beyond Thule*.

⁶⁷⁶ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 110b:35-111a:7 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:145-146); cf. Sandy 1989:780-781; Stephens & Winkler 1995:126-127.

⁶⁷⁷ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 109a:25-28; 111a:12-15; 111a:41-111b:30 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:141; 146-148); cf. Sandy 1989:778; 781-782; Stephens & Winkler 1995:123; 127-128.

⁶⁷⁸ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 111b:17-18 [cod.166] (Henry 1960:148); cf. Sandy 1989:782; Stephens & Winkler 1995:128.

⁶⁷⁹ *SKL*, col.iii.17-20 (Jacobsen 1939:88-91).

One is left with the impression that feeding into the structure and contents of Diogenes' narrative is a tradition of Mesopotamian royal inheritance. At the symbolic moment of his ascension to hegemonic kingship, Alexander is presented as discovering and inheriting the kingly knowledge of Gilgamesh and the *Epic*. Such parallels in Diogenes' narrative with the conceptual geographical structure and progression of Gilgamesh's mythical wanderings, his overt association of his narrative with Alexander, and the conspicuous connection with Tyre seem to represent a testament of this inheritance of the themes and motifs of the Gilgamesh tradition by the Alexander tradition. A narrative such as the hypothesised 'cypress tablet-box letter' (for want of a better title) would thus serve the double-function of ideologically providing Alexander with kingly knowledge of the lands beyond and fictionalising a genuine dependency of the Alexander tradition upon the Gilgamesh tradition.

Before moving on to my proposed methodological revision, it would be remiss of me not to include the acquisition of the casket of Darius by Alexander after Issus in the present discussion. Although it has become something different in the Alexander tradition as we have it, utilised to signify the different kinds of things the respective kings valued the most, the inheritance of this casket alongside the rest of the royal trappings after defeating Darius at Issus could be a narrative remnant of a continuous tradition of inheritance and succession in Mesopotamian kingship.⁶⁸⁰ When considered in this way, the depositing of Homer's *Iliad* in the casket theoretically reserved for the *Epic of Gilgamesh* has a sort of poetic symmetry for its transfer to Greek culture. If accepted, one could get excited about the continuing supplanting and appropriation of the Gilgamesh tradition by Homeric literature.⁶⁸¹ However, it should by now be clear that the Gilgamesh parallels in the Alexander tradition are not a result of a filtration through earlier Greek literature such as

⁶⁸⁰ Plut. *Alex.* xxvi.1-2; Pliny, *NH*, vii.29; xiii.1.

⁶⁸¹ Cf. West 1997b:335-347; 401-417; 437; Bachvarova 2016. Also see, Jensen (1902) for an early comparison of the *Epic* and Homer, and Gresseth (1975) for a useful summary of the scholarship on parallels between the two up to that point.

Homer, but the direct result of Alexander's accession to the position of great king in Mesopotamia and its involved royal ideological inheritance.

6.3.3 A methodological adjustment in the analysis of parallels between the mythical wanderings of Gilgamesh and Alexander

With the case for a direct relationship between our subject traditions expanded, it is necessary before we advance further to adjust the methodological approach in relation to this episode. The significance of Diogenes' narrative and the absence of it from the debate on the Alexander tradition's dependency upon the Gilgamesh tradition is representative of this required adjustment. It is neither profitable nor good practice to limit the study of comparisons for our protagonists' mythical wanderings to a particular letter in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (i.e. the *First Miracle Letter*). As we have seen in the example of the gamma recension above, the content (and so potential parallels) was able to escape the confinement of a particular letter and restrictions of the miracle-letter genre more generally, surfacing in third-person narrations of wonder campaigns for our protagonist, Alexander.⁶⁸² In addition to this both Meissner's and Henkelman's studies have demonstrated the need to expand the field of comparison to include the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom*.⁶⁸³ It then follows that due to the intertextuality between the miracle letters and wonder campaigns of *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, as well as the conflated accounts presented in associated narratives (i.e. the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom*), that this does not go far enough and the scope for analysis should be widened even further. Some simple examples will prove the point.⁶⁸⁴

Firstly the *SyrLeg* and the *SyrHom* both combine in the same narrative and mythical campaign details comparable to that of the *First Miracle Letter*, and the

⁶⁸² Cf. *Gamma*, iii.27-28 (Parthe 1969:408-420) for a third person narration of the mythical campaign of *Third Miracle Letter*.

⁶⁸³ Meissner 1894; Henkelman 2010.

⁶⁸⁴ See Gunderson (1980:34-90) for a more detailed study of examples of commonality and borrowing (of which there are many) between the miracle letters and wonder campaigns in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives in his study of the independently attested letter to Aristotle about India. Cf. Jouanno 2002:265-271; Henkelman 2010:326.

construction of a gate against the peoples of Gog and Magog.⁶⁸⁵ The construction of this gate is presented in Book III of *Pseudo-Callisthenes* aligning it with the mythical campaign of the *Third Miracle Letter*.⁶⁸⁶ The *Armenian* appears to share traces of the conflation present in the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom*, when it states in its version of the *First Miracle Letter* that Alexander sealed up the uninhabited regions upon his return to the inhabited world.⁶⁸⁷ Secondly Alexander's encounter with the Brahmins naturally belongs to his campaigns in India and so also forms part of Book III in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*.⁶⁸⁸ However, a variation of this encounter with the Brahmins has been inserted into the narration of the mythical campaign in the gamma recension that aligns with the *First Miracle Letter*.⁶⁸⁹ Thirdly Alexander reaches the palace of Semiramis during his mythical wanderings in book II of *gamma*.⁶⁹⁰ The palace is deserted at this point, but when Alexander sets out to Queen Candace in book III the palace of Semiramis is again the destination, but this time it is occupied by this successor queen.⁶⁹¹ It is easy to see in this example how motifs could move from one journey to Semiramis' palace to the other.

Likewise in the *Second Miracle Letter* (iii.7-16 [17]) we are presented with Alexander embarking upon a wonder campaign to the North directly after having conquered Darius and subdued his territory.⁶⁹² This clearly mirrors and stems from the motive and catalyst for the mythical wanderings detailed in the *First Miracle Letter*.⁶⁹³ Finally the *Third Miracle Letter* (iii.27-28) presents a wonder-campaign of Alexander's starting at Babylon shortly before his death and venturing beyond the

⁶⁸⁵ For the Gate against Gog and Magog, see *SyrHom*, 230ff (Budge 1889:177-200) and *SyrLeg* (Budge 1889:150-156); for comparisons between *SyrHom*, *SyrLeg*, and *First Miracle Letter*, see Meissner (1894) and Henkelman (2010).

⁶⁸⁶ *Gamma*, iii.29 [26a] (Parthe 1969:396-408; Stoneman 1991:185-187); cf. *beta*, iii.29 (MSS B and M; Bergson 1965:205-207) and *Epsilon*, 39 (Trumpf 1974:141-148); Merkelbach 1977:148-149. For Alexander's gate against Gog and Magog more generally, see Anderson 1932; Stoneman 2008:174-185.

⁶⁸⁷ *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:116).

⁶⁸⁸ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.5-6. For examples, see *A-text* (Kroll 1958:104-106); *beta* (Bergson 1965:143-148); and *L text* (van Thiel 1974:128-133); cf. Merkelbach 1977:140-141. For Alexander and the Brahmins more generally, see Stoneman 1994; 1995; 2008:91-106.

⁶⁸⁹ *Gamma*, ii.35a (Stoneman 2012:224-269); cf. Gunderson 1980:79.

⁶⁹⁰ *Gamma*, ii.34.1-2 (Stoneman 2012:220-223); cf. *Epsilon*, 29.1-2 (Trumpf 1974:101-102).

⁶⁹¹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.18 (Kroll 1958:115; Bergson 1965:152-153; Parthe 1969:350; van Thiel 1974:136-137). Cf. Stoneman 2008:140-143.

⁶⁹² *A-text*, 17.10-12 (Kroll 1958:107-108); cf. Stoneman 1991:182-193.

⁶⁹³ E.g. *L-text*, ii.23; 32 (van Thiel 1974:104-107).

limits (alt. pillars/cave of Herakles).⁶⁹⁴ Obviously this sort of campaign cannot securely be separated from the mythical wanderings of the *First and Second Miracle Letters* (and the hypothesized 'cypress tablet-box letter') due to the evident commonality in motifs, themes, and ideology.⁶⁹⁵ Therefore, it is evident that motifs, themes, and so potential parallels, were able to travel freely between the miracle letters and wonder campaigns of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, and the comparable connected wonder-narratives, such as the *SyrHom* and *SyrLeg*. Each miracle letter, wonder campaign, or wonder narrative can then be understood as a conflation of Alexander's mythologized campaigning or equally an artificial separation of it. The placement or inclusion of a wonder narrative or mythologized campaign at a particular point in the chronology of the overall campaign by Alexander is indicative of the specific engagement with the particular set of ideological circumstances (or more simply demonstrative of influence/bias).

The ideological significance of the placement of the *First Miracle Letter* after the death of Darius has been explained above. The *Third Miracle Letter* is directly comparable to this and engages with the same ideology. It is a campaign that originates at Babylon and simply occurs shortly before Alexander's death rather than directly after Darius'. The avoidance of the death of the king can still be applied and understood, even though it not overtly stated. Its placement so late in the narrative may be intentional (i.e. engaging with Alexander's effort to escape death) or simply the result of requiring Alexander to embark on the campaign from Babylon. The *Second Miracle Letter* (and *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle about India*) belongs to an established Greek literary tradition concerning the wonders of India. This without doubt stems from the transmission of Persian imperial ideology by authors such as Herodotus and Ctesias.⁶⁹⁶ The conceptualisation of the limits present in these examples is clearly inherited from a Mesopotamian

⁶⁹⁴ Kroll 1958:128-131; Bergson 1965:173-179; Parthe 1969:408-420; van Thiel 1974:152-157); cf. Armenian, 258 (Wolohojian 1969:145-147); *Syriac*, iii.17-18 (Budge 1889:131-134);

⁶⁹⁵ E.g. a journey beyond the limits, encountering of wonders, and traversing of a region of darkness; cf. Gunderson 1980:86-90.

⁶⁹⁶ For examples, see *FGrH* 688 F 45 (Ctesias, *Indica*, apud Photius, *Bibliotheca*, 45a20-50a4 [cod.72]; Henry 1959:133-147; cf. Nichols 2011); HDT iii.102-106; iv.37-45 (esp. 40.2; 44); cf. Gunderson 1980:91-122; Romm 1992:82-120; Stoneman 2008:67-90; Priestley 2014:51-156; de Bakker 2016:89-92.

conceptualisation of empire and the mythologized lands beyond.⁶⁹⁷ Simply they serve to demonstrate continuity through the Achaemenid period.

Thus Alexander's mythological campaigning to and beyond the limits within his tradition becomes wholly relevant to the analysis of parallels with Gilgamesh and Mesopotamian kingship tradition more generally. It is not possible for us to securely segregate one of these narratives or narrations from any of the others in a study of this kind. All must be searched and considered for parallels with the Gilgamesh tradition and Mesopotamian kingship ideology. Although the positioning and structural relationship with the death of the king is more overt and so conspicuous in the placement of the *First Miracle Letter*, the death of the king and the transfer of power are not inalienable from the other miracle letters or the mythical wanderings that occur later in some of the narratives. Note that the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom* do not exhibit this structural relationship with the death of the king, but retain pertinent parallels emphasising the requirement for the argued-for methodological adjustment. The structural arrangement and placement of the *First Miracle Letter* simply mean that a connection between the two traditions is difficult to deny at this point and more easily understood, but this position of surety does not and clearly should not restrict the search to this particular point of the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives or the wider Alexander tradition. A position such as this naturally widens the parameters of study, but it is unavoidable due to the evidence from within the narratives of the mythical campaigns themselves. One does not of course have to offer a comprehensive analysis of every detail in the mythical wanderings of Alexander, but one should be open to possibility that the parallels have become as itinerant as the protagonist himself.

6.3.4 Comparable conceptual landscapes and consistency in variation

As stated, shades of this methodological approach are already evident in the studies by Meissner and Henkelman. The result was that both scholars were able to

⁶⁹⁷ Cf. Haubold 2013a:73-126; Murray 2016.

highlight common features in terrain and location that firmly placed Alexander and Gilgamesh in comparable (and arguably the same) mythological landscapes.⁶⁹⁸ These were: the common crossing of a mountainous region through ravines populated by wild animals;⁶⁹⁹ the conspicuous arrival of each at Mount Māšu/Mûsâs;⁷⁰⁰ comparable references to the gates/windows through which the sun rises/sets;⁷⁰¹ the twelve double-hours of darkness that Gilgamesh travels and the twelve day journey to penetrate the land of darkness for Alexander;⁷⁰² the jewelled forest of the gods in the *Epic*, and the Anaphanda trees and jewelled terrain of the Land of Darkness in Alexander's journey;⁷⁰³ the long sea journey and encounter with the Waters of Death/Foetid Sea in the East;⁷⁰⁴ and finally Utanapishti's island beyond the Path of the Sun and Waters of Death with the Land/Islands of the Blessed beyond the Land of Darkness (and with Paradise beyond regions of darkness and the Foetid Sea) in the Alexander tradition.⁷⁰⁵

This clearly amounts to a complex series of parallels between the mythical wanderings of our subject protagonists. With this already attested in scholarship one could advance immediately to comparable functionality, but resistance to the argued for relationship requires some further clarification. This is because even Henkelman concluded cautiously and rather ambiguously concerning the relationship between the two traditions at this point. He claimed that the mythical

⁶⁹⁸ Meissner 1894:13-15; Henkelman 2010:329-336; 351.

⁶⁹⁹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.32.1-2 (Stoneman 1991:115; Stoneman 2012:128-129; 216-217); *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112); *SB Epic*, ix.7-37 (George 2003:666-669).

⁷⁰⁰ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 102 (Budge 1889:148-149; 168); cf. *Ethiopic Pseudo-Callisthenes* (hereafter, *Ethiopic*; Budge 1896:226-227); *SB Epic*, ix.37-38 (George 2003:668-669).

⁷⁰¹ *SyrLeg* (Budge 1889:148); *SB Epic*, ix.37-45 (George 2003:668-669).

⁷⁰² *SyrHom*, 133-155 (Budge 1889:170-171); cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:244); *SB Epic*, ix.78-170 (George 2003:670-673).

⁷⁰³ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.32.3; 39.10-41.1 (van Thiel 1974:104-107; 116-119; Stoneman 1991:115; 121-122; Stoneman 2012:128-129; 138-139; 216-217; 280-283; cf. Wheeler 2002:28; Horowitz 2011:102); cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112-113); *SB Epic*, ix.171-196 (George 2003:672-675); and *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.21.1-2 (Kroll 1958:118-119; Bergson 1965:159-160; Parthe 1969:366; van Thiel 1974:140-143; Stoneman 1991:138-139), where Alexander passes through a spectacular forest, known as the 'dwelling of the gods', where the apples are said to gleam like gold (en route to the palace of Candace).

⁷⁰⁴ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 90-100 (Budge 1889:147-148; 168); cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:223-226); *SB Epic*, x.169-183 (George 2003:688-689). Wheeler 2002:28.

⁷⁰⁵ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.39-40.2 (van Thiel 1974:112-117; Stoneman 1991:119-121; Stoneman 2012:134-137; 276-283); cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:115-116); *SyrLeg* (Budge 1889:152); *SB Epic*, ix.75-x.211 (George 2003:670-691).

geography was jumbled in the Alexander tradition when compared to its order in the *Epic*, and that motifs such as the Foetid Sea were retained, but blind in the Alexander tradition.⁷⁰⁶ However, upon closer inspection a coherent conceptual landscape and interaction with the tradition of the *Epic* is apparent.

In the *SyrLeg*, Alexander departs from Egypt and travels for four months across the sea to the distant East.⁷⁰⁷ Beyond the eleven bright seas, Alexander reaches a stretch of dry land and the shore of the 'Foetid Sea'. These waters bring death to all who approach it. Alexander decides to test this and when it is proven accurate he accepts it as an impassable barrier.⁷⁰⁸ As outlined above, this represents a parallel with Gilgamesh's voyage out to and beyond the Waters of Death (note that there are subtle differences, e.g. the point of departure, and the 'Waters of Death' begin out at sea, as opposed to directly at the shore). That this occurs at the beginning of Alexander's wanderings as opposed to near the culmination of Gilgamesh's makes it understandable that disorder has been understood and argued for when comparing the two traditions. However, this more likely represents an engagement with the Gilgamesh tradition, and it is not a blind motif.⁷⁰⁹

As we learn in the closing passages of Tablet XI, Urshanabi, the boatman, is banished from Utanapishti's shore so that no one can repeat Gilgamesh's feat and cross the Waters of Death.⁷¹⁰ The way has been shut. When Alexander attempts to venture beyond the limits he reaches these waters in the distant East. Confronted by this mythological barrier, he has no way 'to cross over to the place where were the ends of the heavens.'⁷¹¹ Alexander has approached the mythological limit that Gilgamesh pressed and goes as far as circumstances and tradition will allow him. He cannot cross as Gilgamesh did, as tradition has established that these waters can no

⁷⁰⁶ Henkelman 2010:351-355.

⁷⁰⁷ The *SyrHom*, 94-95, states that this voyage was in the direction of India (Budge 1889:168).

⁷⁰⁸ Budge 1889:147-148.

⁷⁰⁹ Cf. *SyrLeg* (Budge 1889:152), for the Foetid Sea lying between man and Paradise.

⁷¹⁰ *SB Epic*, xi.247-249 (George 2003:718-718).

⁷¹¹ Budge 1889:148.

longer be traversed.⁷¹² Alexander's encounter with this supernatural barrier is then directly followed in the *SyrLeg* by an explanation of the path of the sun. We are informed that the sun rises over the sea and travels in the midst of the heavens until it reaches the place where it enters the window of heaven. It then spends the whole night travelling and descending through the heavens (for the sun does not rest) until it finds itself back at the place where it rises.⁷¹³ This is a solar journey akin to one argued above for the *Epic*, providing us with a conspicuous parallel in the Alexander tradition for the Path of Sun in the Gilgamesh tradition. Although Alexander does not travel the path as his predecessor did, the recurrence of this conceptual cosmology at this point and place is a startling significant and complex parallel that cannot be understated.

These two cosmological parallels are then complemented by Alexander's engagement with the third from the Gilgamesh tradition. Having turned back from the Foetid Sea in the East (and after this digression on the path of the sun), Alexander advances to the West and arrives at Mount Mûsâs.⁷¹⁴ Alexander then continues into the North beyond this western Mûsâs.⁷¹⁵ Here lies the access to the Land of Darkness and the Fountain of Life, Paradise, and the mythological regions that Alexander will seal up against Gog and Magog.⁷¹⁶ The reluctance of Meissner and Henkelman to put too much weight upon this Mûsâs/Masis/Māšu parallel due to the Armenian name for Mount Ararat (Masis) is overly cautious.⁷¹⁷ This clearly represents a parallel with Gilgamesh's access to the mythical lands beyond Mount Māšu. The journey itself in the Gilgamesh tradition is connected with a quest to reach the flood hero, and whilst the specific mountain in the *Epic* is Mount Nimuš, by the time of Berossus the Armenian mountains had supplanted this locale and

⁷¹² Cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:224-226), which likewise presents Alexander thwarted by this maritime barrier, but conspicuously presents Alexander sealing this limit.

⁷¹³ Budge 1889:148; cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:226).

⁷¹⁴ Note that it is possible that the *SyrLeg* refers to both the eastern and western Mûsâs at this point, as the name is duplicated in seemingly different locations (Budge 1889:148-149); cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:226-228); Henkelman (2010:336n.56). Budge seems to accept Meissner's identification of this Mûsâs with the Māšu of the *Epic* (Budge 1896:226-227n.2).

⁷¹⁵ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 100-105 (Budge 1889:148-149; 168-169); cf. *Ethiopic* (1896:226), where Mûsâs has become a river in the West near where the sun sets.

⁷¹⁶ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 105-701 (Budge 1889:149-156; 169-200); cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:228-286).

⁷¹⁷ Meissner 1894:13; Henkelman 2010:335-336.

connection.⁷¹⁸ Therefore, rather than representing an obstacle to the parallel, it more accurately represents a further detail in support of the comparison.

Each of these parallels on their own would be compelling (i.e. Waters of Death/Foetid Sea, Path of the Sun/s, and Mount Māšu/Mûsâs), but the combination of such a complex series of parallels within such proximity in the narrative and conceptual space makes it difficult to ignore or deny the impact of the *Epic* upon the Alexander tradition. It also heavily implies a direct engagement with the Gilgamesh tradition. Alexander has encountered the Waters of Death in the East, and traced backwards discovering the Path of the Sun and encountering the mighty Māšu. Alexander is clearly seen to tread the conceptual world of the *Epic* and encounter the cosmological barriers that his Mesopotamian predecessor had before him. Alexander's advance into the mythological regions beyond the limits via the North could then be understood as a misunderstanding of Gilgamesh's path in the *Epic* (i.e. in relation to the mentioning of the north wind as Gilgamesh travels along the Path of the Sun).⁷¹⁹ However, one does not have to malign the Alexander tradition so, and such a position would hardly align with the reasonably accurate engagements with the conceptual landscape of the *Epic* to this point attested in the *SyrLeg* (also the *Ethiopic*, and somewhat the *SyrHom*).

Instead Alexander's advance to the North should be understood as an alternative route into the lands beyond and an engagement with further Mesopotamian conceptualisations of the world (for example, a world similar to that exhibited on the *Babylonian Map of the World*).⁷²⁰ The *BabMW* survives through a Late Babylonian copy (BM 92687), but dates originally to sometime in the 9th-7th centuries BCE.⁷²¹ It conceptualises the Babylonian world by labelling certain 'known' places and surrounding this 'known world' with an encircling ocean. The map is

⁷¹⁸ *SB Epic*, xi.142-146 (George 2003:712-713); F4a [55] (Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:50); cf. *Genesis* 8.4.

⁷¹⁹ *SB Epic*, ix.163 (George 2003:672-673).

⁷²⁰ For the *Babylonian Map of the World* (hereafter, *BabMW*), see Horowitz 1988; 2011:20-42.

⁷²¹ Fig.10; Horowitz 2011:25-26. The date is narrowed by certain details such as the inclusion of Bit Yakin and its reference to the Mediterranean as *marratu*.

aligned on a northwest-southeast axis rather than a strict North-South axis.⁷²² This is an orientation consistent with a region that had by tradition conceptualised its world from the Upper to the Lower Sea, from sunrise to sunset, from Tyre to Dilmun.⁷²³ Horowitz accurately identified the two parallel lines that dissect the city of Babylon on the map as the banks of the Euphrates River. On the map, the river continues beyond Babylon until it reaches a large mountain [no.1] to the northwest. This has likewise correctly been identified as detailing the source of the river in the mountains of modern day eastern Turkey or ancient Armenia.⁷²⁴

Beyond this mountain and across the sea is the 'northern' *nagû* [no.18] (one of potentially eight on the map). These *nagû* are understood as regions or islands across the sea.⁷²⁵ Although they may refer partly to genuine locations across the sea, they are clearly more mythologized spaces on *BabMW*.⁷²⁶ This 'northern' *nagû* is captioned as the 'Great Wall'.⁷²⁷ To the left of this *nagû* is more text that states that there are '6 *bēru* in between where the sun is not seen'.⁷²⁸ It is not immediately clear whether this text refers to the 'northern' *nagû* or the space in-between.⁷²⁹ It would seem due to the repetition of this detail to the left of each visible *nagû* that the latter is more likely. There are a further four visible *nagû* around the encircling ocean on the map with space to plausibly allow for up to eight *nagû* should the map be fully recovered.⁷³⁰ The text to the left of the next *nagû* [no.19] only provides a distance in-between.⁷³¹ Therefore, we are left to consider

⁷²² *Contra* Delano Smith 1996 and Horowitz 2011:27-28.

⁷²³ In further support of this revised alignment, viewing the map in this way resolves most of the plotting errors of known places highlighted by Horowitz, as now: Urartu [no.3] is appropriately located to the North and slightly to the West of Babylon [no.13]; Assyria [no.4] sits to the North; Der [no.5] is position to Babylon's northeast; Susa [no.8] lies to the East; and Bit Yakin [no.10] is appropriately to the southeast. Habban [no.12] is the only locale that remains problematic with this arrangement. Cf. Fig.10 and Horowitz 2011:27-29.

⁷²⁴ Horowitz 2011:28; Haubold 2013a:107.

⁷²⁵ Horowitz 2011:30-32; cf. CAD, xi.1:121-123.

⁷²⁶ Delano Smith 1996:209; Huxley 1997:190; Ulf 2008:155; Horowitz 2011:30-40; Ataç 2013:388-389; Haubold 2013a:108-110; Murray 2016:48-50.

⁷²⁷ BÂD.GU.LA; Finkel 1995; Horowitz 2011:22; cf. Horowitz 1997.

⁷²⁸ 6 *bēru*; *ina bi-rit*; *a-šar* ^d*šamaš*; *la innammaru* (nu.igi.lá) (Horowitz 2011:22); cf. Delano Smith 1996:210-211.

⁷²⁹ Alternatively, Haubold (2013a:108) suggests that it could refer to the distance between the *nagû* and the known continent.

⁷³⁰ Horowitz 2011:30.

⁷³¹ Horowitz 2011:22; cf. Delano Smith 1996:210-211.

whether the darkness in-between is unique to the 'northern' space, or is to be considered shorthand and that repetition should be inferred (the other *nagû* are currently too fragmentary to accurately access to matter).⁷³²

Now the general notion of an encircling ocean surrounding the 'known world' is of course not absent from Greek literature before Alexander, but it is the complexity of detail (and the already identified influence of the *Epic*) that strongly implies an engagement with Mesopotamian sources.⁷³³ In the *SyrLeg*, when Alexander reaches the mountains to the northwest and the western Mûsâs he also visits the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris, as other kings of Mesopotamia had claimed to have done in the past.⁷³⁴ Alexander is not in a completely abstract space as yet. He can be located at the mountain [No.1] on the *BabMW* at the source of the Euphrates. He will then: progress into the North;⁷³⁵ approach the great boundary mountain that god has set up;⁷³⁶ learn of/traverse a region of darkness;⁷³⁷ this is a journey of 12 days;⁷³⁸ and set up his own gate blocking the way thereafter.⁷³⁹

Thus details which appeared to be random, confused and abstract clearly slot into place when the conceptual geographical stencils of the *Epic* and the *BabMW* are employed. The same cannot be said of any extant Greek language literature pre-

⁷³² For example, Huxley (1997:191-192) considers all of the regions/islands beyond the encircling ocean on the *BabMW* to be beyond the sun, each potentially with their own source of illumination, and that darkness exists between them. Cf. Horowitz (2011:32-33), who understands the darkness as unique to the 'northern' *nagû*.

⁷³³ E.g. HDT, iv.36.2; Homer, *Iliad*, xviii.607-608; *Odyssey*, xi.11-19; cf. Geus 2003; Mitchell 2007:177-179; 187-194.

⁷³⁴ Budge 1889:148-149. Cf. Shalmaneser III's expedition to the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates (Layard 1851:92; *Balawat Gates*, Band X.4-6, King 1915:pl.57-59; Horowitz 2011:28).

⁷³⁵ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 101-105 (Budge 1889:149; 168-169).

⁷³⁶ *SyrLeg*; cf. *SyrHom*, 140-141; 220-236 (Budge 1889:150; 171; 176-177); cf. the 'northern' *nagû* labelled BÂD.GU.LA 'Great Wall' on the *BabMW* (Horowitz 2011:22; 32-33), and the Great Wall of Sargon of Akkad (Horowitz 1997; *Sargon Birth Legend*, 20; 30; Westenholz 1997:42-45). All should be considered in relation to the Mâšu mountains of the *Epic* as explained above (unsurpassable mythological and conceptual barriers at the ends of the earth).

⁷³⁷ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 131-207 (Budge 1889:152; 170-175); cf. the region of darkness next to the 'northern' *nagû* on the *BabMW* (Horowitz 2011:22).

⁷³⁸ *SyrHom*, 140-141 (Budge 1889:171) cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:224); the 12 *bêru* around the Path of the Sun for Gilgamesh (*SB Epic*, ix.82-83; George 2003:670-671; Meissner 1894:13), and 6 *bêru* (so potentially 12 hours) on the *BabMW* (Horowitz 2011:22).

⁷³⁹ *SyrLeg*; *SyrHom*, 258-271; 340-389 (Budge 1889:153-156; 178-179; 182-185); cf. *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.26a (Stoneman 1991:185-187; Parthe 1969:396-408); *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:116). This is what has become known as the Gate against Gog and Magog.

dating Alexander, nor any from the Egyptian milieu. It is by utilising these Mesopotamian geographies that one can comprehend, map, and follow Alexander's mythical wanderings in the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom* in detail and with accuracy. They combine to provide a predefined path upon which Alexander must tread as he undertakes this ideologically required journey for the Mesopotamian monarch. That it is both the *Epic* and something akin to the *BabMW* that are employed and engaged with should not cause concern when evaluating the interaction with the Gilgamesh tradition. Instead it should be understood as corroborative, further demonstrating the scale of Mesopotamian influence, and the interchangeable and complementary nature of these Mesopotamian conceptualisations of the world. As Ulf suggested, one could easily imagine a Babylonian pointing to the position on the *BabMW* where Gilgamesh crossed the sea to Utanapishti.⁷⁴⁰

However, it is not just in the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom* where this is evident. The relationship to Mesopotamian-centric conceptualisations of the world (and the specifically the *Epic*) extends to the presented geography at this point in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives too. In contrast to the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom*, the conceptual world in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* is modelled upon the imperial reality of the Persian Empire. This is clearly demonstrated when we are informed at the outset of the mythical wanderings that Alexander subdues all of the territory previously held by Darius and then advances beyond the limits (via the North) into a mythologized space.⁷⁴¹ This particular kind of engagement with the limits of empire immediately presents us with a parallel of function for the wanderings of accession in our subject traditions. Just as we have seen for Gilgamesh in the *Epic*, the mythical wanderings of accession in the Alexander tradition are seen to engage with the imperial world held by the 'predecessor'. By mythologizing the lands beyond these imperial limits *Pseudo-Callisthenes* ratifies the conceptual world of the empire as it

⁷⁴⁰ Ulf 2008:155; Haubold 2013a:110; cf. Huxley 1997:191-192; Horowitz 2011:106; Ataç 2013:388.

⁷⁴¹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.23.7[5]-32.1 (van Thiel 1974:104-105; Stoneman 1991:115; Stoneman 2012:126-129; 216-217); cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112) and *A-text*, iii.17.10-12 (Kroll 1958:107-108). It should be noted here that the *Armenian* specifically states that Alexander subdued all the territory previously held by Darius the Great, seemingly connecting Alexander's conquests of the inhabited world with a more distant Achaemenid predecessor.

transfers from the king to his successor. Once again it is not just emulation of a Mesopotamian model, but the continuity of the ideology that is detected.

Yet *Pseudo-Callisthenes* does not wholly sacrifice the earlier Mesopotamian conceptual landscapes of the *Epic* and *BabMW* in Alexander's mythical campaign. It is significantly the world of the empire that has been altered, as the ideology demands. *Pseudo-Callisthenes* presents a conceptual world shaped upon the current imperial reality, just as the *Epic* had for Gilgamesh's imperial reaches, the *BabMW* seems to do for a 'Babylonian world', and how the *Sargon Geography* conceptualised the world in relation to Sargon of Akkad's presented imperial activities (to provide another example).⁷⁴² The Persian Empire was simply the contemporary conceptual landscape upon which the world and its limits were contextualised in line with the transmitted and appropriated imperial ideology. One should note here that it is clear that this ideological contextualisation for the world of the Persian Empire was hardly novel or representative of a renaissance of the Mesopotamian past by the Alexander tradition, as both Darius I and Xerxes had previously conceptualised their empire and its frontiers upon an ideological framework comparable to that of the *BabMW*.⁷⁴³ In fact, on the basis of the current evidence, it would seem that the presence of a concept of an *oikumene* 'inhabited world' in Greek language literature (which is currently first attested in fifth century BCE in authors such as Herodotus) represents a marker of this Persian appropriation of a Mesopotamian imperial ideology.⁷⁴⁴ Herodotus himself frames the *oikumene* upon the Persian Empire and conceptualises its frontiers in a manner familiar to those in the Gilgamesh tradition, *BabMW*, and subsequently in the Alexander tradition.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴² For the *Sargon Geography*, see Grayson 1977; Horowitz 2011:67-96.

⁷⁴³ Haubold 2013a:108-110; Murray 2016.

⁷⁴⁴ Note that the world view of an encircling ocean attested in Homer (*Iliad*, xviii.607-608; *Odyssey*, xi.11-19) very likely represents evidence for Neo-Assyrian influence upon archaic Greek language literature. The encircling ocean in the *Iliad* is present on the *BabMW*, which Horowitz (2011:26) has argued should be dated around the late eighth to early seventh century BCE. When this is combined with the placement of the Cimmerians beyond this encircling ocean in the *Odyssey*, we find ourselves securely on the fringes of the Neo-Assyrian empire and conceptual thought; cf. Lanfranchi 2002; 2011; Mitchell 2007:177-179; Horowitz 2011:106; Murray 2016:52-53.

⁷⁴⁵ Cf. HDT ii.32.4-7, iii.98.2, iii.106.1-2, iii.114, iv.31, iv.40, iv.110, iv.185, v.9.1; Romm 1992:38-41; Mitchell 2007:187-191; Haubold 2013a:98-126; Priestley 2014:109-111; De Bakker 2016; Murray

All this serves to demonstrate that the ideology continued to be transmitted and transferred to the new empires with Mesopotamia at their centres right down to the time of Alexander's accession to hegemonic king in the region. To put things simply, the initial geographical landscape (or 'known' world) in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* does not represent a departure from the Mesopotamian conceptualisations, but instead provides evidence for continuity and change. There is a consistent ideology behind the 'real' worlds of the *Epic*, the *BabMW*, and the Persian Empire. Rather than understanding them as competing landscapes for Alexander's campaigning and mythical wanderings, it is more accurate for one to consider each as representative of layers of sophistication upon the same ideological space. The subtle changes develop the conceptual model, but don't completely reinvent the space. Each conceptualisation interacts with its predecessors and appropriates the topography.

This dynamic also extends to the mythologized space. For example, the region of darkness from Gilgamesh is replicated to the North and potentially in all directions beyond in the *BabMW*, but so is the requirement to cross the sea to a mythologized island/s beyond. Although all *nagû* are not the same, the skeleton topography is consistent. The Gilgamesh tradition has landscaped the regions beyond the *oikumene*,⁷⁴⁶ whilst the *BabMW* has sophisticated the model providing more detail of that which lies between the imperial frontiers, and provided an encircling mythical landscape beyond. *Pseudo-Callisthenes* likewise presents a developed imperial territory, but note how the northern route into the mythological lands beyond aligns with Alexander's direction of travel and route of access found in *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom*, and so tentatively with the *BabMW*.⁷⁴⁷ Alexander's initial

2016. Note *oikumene* is utilised in *gamma* (ii.42.13; Stoneman 2012:290-293) for the 'real' world of the empire; cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112; 116); Diod. xvii.54.5. For the concept of an *oikumene* more generally, see Kaerst 1903; van Paassen 1957:16-24; Gisinger 1937; Thornton 2013; McPhail 2014:254.

⁷⁴⁶ Note that *oikumene* is utilised hereafter in this study as referring to this conceptualised world of the empire.

⁷⁴⁷ It is also worth noting that *gamma*, ii.29-31, (comparably to the *SyrLeg* and *SyrHom*) has Alexander set out from Egypt and embark on mythological campaigns ahead of advancing into the

advance beyond a desert frontier to the North is consistent with an Achaemenid conceptualisation of the imperial space to and beyond the Land of Thirst (desert).⁷⁴⁸ It serves to landmark the beginning of the mythologized territory in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. However, as soon as we are beyond the limits we encounter the first topographical parallels with the Gilgamesh tradition (i.e. the ravines full of wild animals followed by a mythological forest).⁷⁴⁹ Regions of darkness are subsequently crossed,⁷⁵⁰ sea-shores are approached, treacherous waters are encountered, and attempts are made to reach mythical islands.⁷⁵¹ The skeleton topography of the *Epic* is apparent, as the Gilgamesh tradition is also seen to landscape the mythologized space in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*.

Yet it is more than this that is evident. The repetition of these topographical features in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (i.e. Alexander encounters these features more than once) implies a circumnavigation of all of the outer regions, rather than just an advance in one direction. This brings us back to the *BabMW*. Alexander's constant advances towards the sea and treading its shores in the mythical lands beyond heavily implies the skirting of an encircling ocean. This is something that Alexander's flight subsequently confirms.⁷⁵² The encircling ocean of the *BabMW* is not absent in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, it has simply been pushed further back to a

North in chapter 32 (Stoneman 2012:208-217). Cf. *Epsilon*, 25-27 (Trumpf 1974:89-96; Merkelbach 1977:137).

⁷⁴⁸ E.g. *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.32.1 (Stoneman 2012:128-129; 216-217); cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112). DPg; Weissbach 1911:85; 87; Kuhrt 2007:483; Haubold 2013a:109-110.

⁷⁴⁹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.32 (van Thiel 1974:104-107; Stoneman 2012:128-129; 216-217); cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112-113). It should be noted here that the crossing of a desert ahead of advancing into the mountains has a Mesopotamian pedigree. See Steinkeller (2007:219-222) for a discussion of this in Sumerian sources where one crosses the desert ahead of mythologized journeys into the eastern Zagros, and to conceptualised locales such as Aratta. This raises the possibility that the 'desert ahead of the mountains' topographical motif existed in a version of Gilgamesh's journey beyond the limits currently lost to us (cf. *DG*, M 49-60; 140-150; George 1999:198-199; 202; Gadotti 2014:104-105). Also see Haubold (2013a:110n125) for the crossing of deserts in Mesopotamian royal tradition.

⁷⁵⁰ For two regions of darkness, see *beta*, *L-text*, *gamma*, ii.38.1; 39-41.1 (van Thiel 1974:110-119; Stoneman 2012:134-139; 270-283); and *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:115-116); cf. *Gamma*, iii.33.20-23 (Parthe 1969:450).

⁷⁵¹ *Gamma*, ii.34.8-10; 35; 35a; 37.4-6; 38; 40.1-2 (Stoneman 2012:222-269; 270-275; 280-283); *L-text*, ii.37.4-5; 38; 40.1 (van Thiel 1974:108-113; 116-117). Cf. Merkelbach 1977:132-138; Stoneman 1991:117-122; 178-179.

⁷⁵² *L-text/gamma*, ii.41.12 (van Thiel 1974:120-121; Stoneman 2012:286-287). For Alexander's Flight, see Millet 1923. Note that the idea of an encircling ocean is also attested in Arrian, *Anab.* v.26.1-2; cf. Geus 2003.

position more consistent with Gilgamesh's own encounter with the sea. Alexander is then understood in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* to have entered the lands beyond via the North, but then to have circumnavigated them and pressed every limit.⁷⁵³

So, in summary, the *SyrLeg* engages accurately with the conceptual world of the *Epic*, whilst the lands beyond to the North and the detailed route of access conflate this with the world of the *BabMW*. The *BabMW* provides us with an expanded map of the lands beyond the limits, but remains relatively true to the topography of these regions in the *Epic* as the simple foundations of the mythological space are *Epic* shaped and *BabMW* duplicated. *Pseudo-Callisthenes* utilises the Persian Empire for the imperial space and articulates familiar Achaemenid frontier wildernesses to separate the *oikumene* from the uninhabited regions beyond. Yet these lands beyond in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* likewise bear traces of the *Epic* shape and detail, whilst indicating an engagement with the *BabMW* duplication. Thus each conceptualised map complements the other and interacts by sophisticating the 'world' not by supplanting it. This would be an important distinction for its relationship to the continuity of kingship in Mesopotamia. That it is an engagement with a combined conceptual map within the Alexander tradition at this point also keenly demonstrates that the ideology was understood and modified to fit the specific influences, viewpoint, or bias (i.e. Gilgamesh, Babylon, or Persian Empire).

Therefore, although the emulation of Gilgamesh is clearly detected, it is not only this, but also a parallel engagement with the Mesopotamian ideology of succession. When all three conceptual worlds (*Epic*, *BabMW*, and the Persian Empire) are considered complementary and combined, then Alexander's experiences in the uninhabited regions become even more sophisticated, and can be followed. Finally, the repetition of comparable landscapes in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* isn't to be understood simply as borrowing and recycling of a particular space, but a conscious duplication which emphasised totality. Alexander is understood not to have simply pressed the limits in a particular direction, but to have circumnavigated the

⁷⁵³ Cf. *Gamma*, ii.29.1-4; iii.33.20-23 (Parthe 1969:450; Stoneman 2012:208-211).

oikumene exploring all of the uninhabited lands (comparable to the encircling *nagû* found on the *BabMW*).⁷⁵⁴

6.3.5 The totality of Alexander's campaigning and the related solar parity: Alexander's claim to superlative kingship

This exposition of Alexander's advance into the mythologized lands beyond the limits has already presented an ideal of universal campaigning during his mythical wanderings of accession. As we have seen above this was a key function of Gilgamesh's wanderings in the *Epic*. Gilgamesh travelled all lands and attained solar parity during his journey to Utanapishti. This was then overtly connected in the *Epic* with Gilgamesh's claim to superlative kingship. In what follows it will be seen that Alexander's mythical wanderings of accession (and his mythologized campaigning more generally)⁷⁵⁵ functioned comparably within his tradition. Through them his kingship likewise acquired a solar association (or parity) and a comparable claim to superlative kingship was advanced. This will be realised for Alexander through the analysis of a widespread conceptualisation of his empire within the tradition, and through his superlative advance through the mythologized regions beyond these conceptual limits.

Now it is important to understand at the outset that there is nothing particularly unique to our two subject kings in claiming universal conquest, solar parity, even superlative kingship, but establishing that Alexander's wanderings functioned comparably is still pertinent. This is because it demonstrates that there is a consistent ideology between the two traditions and the parallel episodes. It also helps to further substantiate the parallels already argued for and those yet to come. Yet perhaps more importantly, it is specifically here that Alexander shall be seen to have equalled and surpassed his Mesopotamian predecessor.

⁷⁵⁴ Cf. Fig.10.

⁷⁵⁵ Note the methodological adjustment presented above.

We begin the argument for this with a summary of Alexander's campaigning in *gamma*. In the *First Miracle Letter*, the connection between the death of Darius and the quick succession of campaigning from the inhabited world into the uninhabited world is more overt due to its succinct structuring.⁷⁵⁶ This structuring is significant as it enables us to understand the ideological connection between these campaigns and the death of the king. However, at the same time it obscures other aspects, namely the parallel engagement with the conceptualisation of one's empire. As I have shown above the initial campaigning at this point in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* represents a compressed account of Alexander's conquest of the remainder of the Persian Empire. Immediately following *Gamma's* expanded narration of this,⁷⁵⁷ it is overtly claimed that Alexander achieved a universal conquest within the *oikumene*,

καὶ δὴ συναθροίσας πάντα στρατεύματα ὥρμησεν κατὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν· καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐδουλοῦντο καὶ φόρους αὐτῷ ἐδίδοσαν· καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ ἀνθιστάμενος τούτῳ, ὅτι πάντες αὐτὸν ἐφοβήθησαν. διελθὼν δὲ τὴν ὑφ' ἡλίον πᾶσαν, οὐκ ἦν οἰκεῖσθαι τὴν γῆν ἔτι. κελεύει οὖν πάντα τὸν λαὸν ἀπαρτισμὸν ἐξαμηνιαίου χρόνου βαστάσαι, ὡς ἂν τῇ ἀοικίῳ ἐπιβῆναι βουλευσάμενος.

'Then he assembled all his army and marched towards the nations of the Interior. All the nations became his servants and paid him tribute. Not one of them resisted, because they were all afraid of him. He crossed all the land beneath the sun, no habitable part was omitted. He ordered his people to wait for six months, deliberating whether to enter the uninhabited regions.'

(*Gamma*, ii.29.1-3)⁷⁵⁸

It is this particular conceptualisation of Alexander's campaigning that is significant here, and it should feel familiar. It is not just all inhabited lands that Alexander has crossed, but all the lands beneath the sun. Alexander's empire supposedly stretches as far as the sun's reach. Naturally (and unavoidably) this provides Alexander with solar parity, but significantly it also affords him parity with Gilgamesh in this measure. This is because one of the characteristics that had made the king of Uruk so unsurpassable was his solar breadth of campaigning. Therefore, although Alexander cannot yet be said to have surpassed Gilgamesh, he can already be seen to have equalled him with a universal conquest bookmarked by the sun's arc. Alexander's solar parity and unsurpassable campaigning within the 'world' is

⁷⁵⁶ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.23; 32 [*Armenian*, 209].

⁷⁵⁷ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.23-28.

⁷⁵⁸ Stoneman 1991:174; Stoneman 2012:210-211.

therefore achieved quite easily and succinctly in his tradition. Yet the case for his equality with Gilgamesh is not to be made solely from a few lines in *gamma*. This Mesopotamian-style conceptualisation of Alexander's empire and the inherent motifs extend far beyond this narrative, and are actually found to be widespread within the Alexander tradition.⁷⁵⁹

For example, Curtius states that whilst Alexander was in Egypt his desire to go even farther was almost taking him beyond the limits of the sun. Curtius then connects this with an ambition to visit a famed (Graeco-Egyptian) ancestral palace.⁷⁶⁰ Both of these motifs (i.e. outstripping the sun and reaching an ancestral palace) are familiar from the very 'Mesopotamian-esque' mythologized wanderings in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (for the latter motif, see below), making the identification of a parallel and consistent ideology sensible. Yet due to the Egyptian context of these comments it is possible to consider this as solely and simply an engagement with an Egyptian tradition of universal conquest.⁷⁶¹ This is certainly a relevant context,⁷⁶² but restricting our understanding of this passage in Curtius so (or others within the Alexander tradition) would be an error. The paramount importance of considering the entextualisation of the Alexander tradition, rather than simply a contextualisation cannot be stressed enough.⁷⁶³ It is clear that this passage in Curtius should be understood as part of a wider conceptualisation of Alexander's empire, which also bears a Mesopotamian contextualisation and appears to be more securely Mesopotamian in origin.⁷⁶⁴

Neither the Egyptian locale nor the engagement with Egyptian ancestry is obstructive to this position. For comparison consider the 'first miracle campaign' in

⁷⁵⁹ Cf. Merkelbach 1977:64-65; Gunderson 1980:84-85; and Henkelman 2010:327; 353.

⁷⁶⁰ Curtius, iv.8.3; cf. Atkinson 1980:363-364.

⁷⁶¹ Cf. Stadnikow 1995; Galan 2000; Moers 2010.

⁷⁶² E.g. Diodorus' (xvii.51.1-2; cf. xvii.93.4) account of Ammon (at Siwah) granting Alexander dominion over the entire earth. Note that Diodorus (xvii.50.3; cf. Curtius, iv.7.20-21) also claims that there were ancestral royal palaces in the vicinity of the temple of Ammon at Siwah.

⁷⁶³ Note that there is also an evident Greek contextualisation of this ideology in the tradition (cf. Diod. xvii.93.4; Plut. *Alex.* 14.4; and O'Sullivan 2015).

⁷⁶⁴ Cf. *Gamma*, i.27 (Stoneman 1991:167; 2007:308-311) for Alexander's advance South and conquest of the West.

gamma. Alexander sets out on his mythical wanderings here having likewise just subdued Egypt. *Gamma* is also seen to engage with an Egyptian predecessor by surpassing the limits of Sesonchosis' campaigns early on in the mythical wanderings.⁷⁶⁵ Yet the campaign in *gamma* is clearly dominated by Seleucid (and so Mesopotamian) bias (see above). One would not then argue that the campaign in *gamma* was solely or neither simply an Egyptian tradition, nor solely the result of Egyptian influence. It is of course more accurate to understand that aspects of Alexander's mythical wanderings have been appropriated by and contextualised in Egyptian material. Thus Alexander's mythical wanderings bear both an Egyptian and a Mesopotamian contextualisation.

The *SyrLeg* presents us with a further example of this entextualisation of the tradition. Again the campaign is embarked upon from Egypt, and the author of the *SyrLeg* even claims to have sourced his information from manuscripts in the archives of the kings of Alexandria.⁷⁶⁶ Yet it has been clearly demonstrated above that the *SyrLeg* carries traces of an engagement with Mesopotamian antecedents by the Alexander tradition. Once again the Egyptian characteristics do not make the *SyrLeg* a solely Egyptian influenced narrative. It simply shows signs of Egyptian appropriation.

The Ptolemaic appropriation of Alexander and their rival claims to the universal conquest of an Egyptian Empire would have meant that the melding of universal conquest traditions would have been unavoidable, especially when in an Egyptian locale.⁷⁶⁷ This is axiomatic. In *gamma* it is the Seleucid relocation of the Egypt campaign that engenders the infection of Egyptian material and its appropriation of the scene.⁷⁶⁸ In Curtius the Mesopotamian imperial ideology resurfaces on the western frontiers of the empire in Egypt and is naturally somewhat localised. Thus

⁷⁶⁵ *Gamma*, ii.28-31 (Stoneman 2012:208-217). For Sesonchosis, see HDT, ii.102-110; Manetho, F2a (Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:138; 196); Diod. i.53-58; cf. Gunderson 1980:22-23; O'Sullivan and Beck 1982; Ruiz-Montero 1989; Lodynin 2010.

⁷⁶⁶ Budge 1889:144.

⁷⁶⁷ Cf. Stewart 1993:229-262; Boussac 2007; Strootman 2014b:314-315; 321-322.

⁷⁶⁸ Note that the absence of an 'Egyptian' mythical campaign at this point in the *A-text* may support understanding this as an Egyptian appropriation of the campaign (cf. Stoneman 2012:75).

the desire to visit an Egyptian ancestral palace in Curtius is understood as an Egyptian variation of comparable journeys attested in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (the ideology behind these palace visits will be discussed below).⁷⁶⁹

Curtius' own narrative supports this conclusion as it engages with Alexander's solar breadth of campaigning a second time at the limits of the campaign in India.⁷⁷⁰ It then follows that the conceptualisation of Alexander's campaigning in Egypt, should not and cannot be divorced from its conceptualisation in India. It is dual engagement with solar campaigning that is apparent in Curtius. This is true even for the Egyptian contextualisation.⁷⁷¹ However, an Egyptian imperial frontier in India is a reactive fiction.⁷⁷² It is with Mesopotamia-centric empires that an imperial frontier in the Far East and India is found as a conceptual ideal and at times a historical reality.⁷⁷³ This is when this specific kind of conceptualisation of an Indian frontier would be relevant, expected, and it is significantly where we have precedents.

For example, the *Sargon Geography* claims a totality of conquest of all lands under heaven, from sunrise to sunset, for Sargon of Akkad, with an eastern frontier at Meluḥḥa in the Indus Valley.⁷⁷⁴ In the *Sargon Geography* this conceptualised eastern frontier is familiarly and characteristically (for Mesopotamian geography)

⁷⁶⁹ Cf. the palaces of Semiramis (ii.34; iii.18) and Cyrus (iii.28).

⁷⁷⁰ Curtius, ix.4.18.

⁷⁷¹ Cf. Diod. xvii.93.4.

⁷⁷² Note that Diodorus (i.55.2-3) does present an extent of conquest as far as India for Sesonchosis, but this is rendered in comparison to Alexander providing Sesonchosis with a greater extent of conquest. When combined with Sesonchosis' Scythian and European campaigns in Herodotus (ii.103.1) and the claim that he surpassed Darius too (HDT, ii.110.2), it is clear that Sesonchosis' ever expanding campaigning represents an Egyptian response to Persian and Macedonian hegemony.

⁷⁷³ The most obvious and recent being the Persian Empire. See Briant (2002:754-762; 1027-1029; 2010:37-38) and Howe & Mueller (2012:26-31) for Alexander's emulation of Teispid-Achaemenid predecessors on the eastern frontier; cf. *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112), where it is stated that Alexander subdued all the territory conquered by Darius the Great before embarking on his first miracle campaign.

⁷⁷⁴ *Sargon Geography*, 30-31; 43 (Horowitz 2011:70-73). For the identification of the eastern Meluḥḥa with the Indus Valley, see Parpola & Parpola 1975; Potts 1982:280; Heimpel 1987; 1993. Note that the *Sargon Geography* is extant from First Millennium BCE tablets (Horowitz 2011:67), but a Mesopotamian relationship with the eastern Meluḥḥa is well attested for the Akkadian period (for the Akkadian Empire and Meluḥḥa, see Foster 2016:33; 74-75; 82; 99-100; 116; 129; 145; 178; 274).

twinned with a western Meluhha in North Africa.⁷⁷⁵ This doubling of Meluhha is not unique to the *Sargon Geography*, as it is progressively seen to denote both an eastern (Persian Gulf/Indus Valley) location and a western (North African) location in Mesopotamian sources.⁷⁷⁶ This provides us with a long established, comparable conceptualisation of imperial frontiers that exhibits the Mesopotamian twinning or mirroring at the poles of empire.⁷⁷⁷ Thus we have a Mesopotamian precedent, in a reasonably contemporary narrative, for an empire from sunrise to sunset with directly comparable frontiers to those of Alexander's empire (i.e. North Africa and India), and both of these align with the conceptualisation of empire seen above for the *Epic*.

It is then clear that highlighted passages in Curtius are likewise indicative of an ideology of campaigning beyond the arc of the sun to the East (India) and the West (Egypt) that was orientated on a Mesopotamian nexus and originally shaped by Mesopotamian tradition. Curtius provides us with a complexity of detail on this Indian frontier that makes this position unassailable and the conclusion unavoidable. Alexander is said to be taking his troops beyond the sun and the constellations to places which were withdrawn from mortals.⁷⁷⁸ Henkelman tentatively proposed that this could represent a possible reference to Alexander's ascent, but this is too ambitious and cannot be sustained.⁷⁷⁹ It should instead be understood in relation to Alexander's advance beyond the sun and constellations' arcs, not their heights. This advance is then seen to be leading Alexander to the expected mythologized territories beyond the imperial *oikumene*. Thus Alexander's universal march under the sun's arc and his advance towards the mythologized lands beyond is seen to surface in the tradition outside the *gamma* and the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives more generally.

⁷⁷⁵ *Sargon Geography*, 1-2, 30-31 (Horowitz 2011:68-71; 79; 85-86).

⁷⁷⁶ Weidner 1952-1953:7-11; cf. Potts 1982.

⁷⁷⁷ It should be noted that Weidner (1952-1953:11) accurately understood that Meluhha also represented a Mesopotamian conceptual frontier space, and compared it to *ultima Thule*.

⁷⁷⁸ Curtius, ix.4.18.

⁷⁷⁹ Henkelman 2010:327n.17.

Significantly Curtius' narrative provides a range of campaigning for Alexander that pushes both sunrise and sunset, but it is on the Indian frontier that Curtius leaves us in no doubt of the Mesopotamian contextualisation. Here we are informed that beyond the Hypasis (Alexander's eastern frontier) lay a 12-day journey across the desert to the Ganges.⁷⁸⁰ Some have inaccurately assumed that Alexander and his local advisors were ignorant of the lands beyond the Hypasis River (Beas) here,⁷⁸¹ but instead a sophisticated engagement with the ideology of empire and the Indian frontier should be understood. The repetition of the ideological motif of a frontier desert hinterland, which conspicuously takes 12-days to cross, is more clearly a conceptualisation of the frontier rather than any attempt to accurately report the territory.⁷⁸² The northern frontier desert in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (ii.32) at the conceptual edge of the *oikumene*, and just ahead of Alexander's mythical wanderings, is found in Curtius on the eastern border ahead of equally mythologized territory (a Persian antecedent may be assumed, but not currently proven). The complex parallel of 12-day journey to access these lands beyond unavoidably engenders a comparison with the 12-day journey at the northern mythologized frontier in the *SyrHom* (141), and Gilgamesh's twelve double-hours along the Path of the Sun to access the mythologized lands in the East (see above). It is not a genuine distance, but an ideological expanse.

Therefore, a consistent and complex parallel ideological conceptualisation of campaigning and the imperial frontiers is detected. Once spotted the examples are manifold. This conceptualised eastern frontier is also apparent in Arrian. Here Alexander is presented in a speech imploring his troops that no great stretch of land exists between the Hypasis and the Ganges. Alexander then elides the Ganges with the Eastern Sea and the encircling ocean. Alexander is clearly presented

⁷⁸⁰ Curtius, ix.2.1-2; cf. Diod. xvii.93.1-2.

⁷⁸¹ E.g. Bosworth 1988a:132-133; Anson 2015:72.

⁷⁸² Cf. Tarn (1948:280-285) who understood this passage as myth connected to a tradition of Alexander reaching the Ganges. He has been somewhat proven right, as the conceptual desert frontier of Alexander's empire stretches to the Ganges in these narratives. Also consider and compare the 6 (or 4) days across the desert wastes to Siwah on the western frontier (Curtius, iv.7.10-15). Note that Diodorus (xvii.49.3-5) presents a journey of 8 days across the desert to Siwah. The actual presence of a desert is obviously not obstructive to the conceptualisation of the frontier. It simply makes it less conspicuous.

conceptualising his imperial reaches as to the ends of the earth, and he claims as much in Arrian when he states that the limits of his empire are those set by the gods for man.⁷⁸³ This speech in Arrian is clearly related to and complements the ideology detected in Curtius' narrative. Therefore, Bosworth's assertion that the speech was the author's creation and was absent from the Hellenistic sources is not credible or sustainable.⁷⁸⁴ Arrian simply provides another example of this 'Mesopotamian-esque' conceptualisation of the imperial frontiers in the Alexander tradition. Seneca the Elder provides a further example. Here Alexander's advance on the limits in the East is again said to be outstripping the sun and aiming at venturing beyond the *oikumene* towards the outer ocean.⁷⁸⁵ There was clearly and demonstrably a widespread engagement with this particular type of ideological conceptualisation of the empire within the Alexander tradition. It is not simply evident in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, but the 'histories' are seen to mirror these detailing and share these motifs.

That it is the Indian frontier that sees the most common engagement with this ideology and its motifs in the Alexander tradition is not unexpected. It represents the most eastern expanse of the campaign and the culmination of the Macedonian advance (i.e. they are considered to have turned back on the India frontier and halted the imperial campaign/expansion).⁷⁸⁶ Thus this represents the culmination of the conquest of the conceptual world of the empire. One cannot help, but conclude as Strootman has that Alexander's famed desire to reach the limits and conquer the entire world was not unique to the Macedonian king, but simply an engagement with the ideology of kingship and empire long established in Mesopotamian tradition.⁷⁸⁷

⁷⁸³ Arrian, *Anab.* v.26.1-2.

⁷⁸⁴ Bosworth 1988b:129-133; 1995:347-348; followed by Heckel 2003:150. Note that Bosworth's account of Roman engagements with this ideology is both interesting and relevant, but one should surely conclude that the Romans followed Alexander here, not vice versa.

⁷⁸⁵ Seneca the Elder, *Controversiae*, vii.7.19; *Suasoriae*, i.1-4. Note that the passages in Seneca seem to imply a region of darkness beyond too.

⁷⁸⁶ Cf. Heckel 2003; Howe & Mueller 2012.

⁷⁸⁷ Strootman 2014b:307-313; cf. Tarn 1948:378-398; Goukowsky 1978:149-165; Liverani 1979; Holloway 2002; Heckel 2003; Howe & Mueller 2012; Strootman 2014a.

Alexander's flight towards the end of his mythical wanderings in book II of *Pseudo-Callisthenes* should be understood as a further engagement with this Mesopotamian royal ideology of universal conquest. This is because it complements Alexander's solar parity by setting a celestial limit for his campaigning. As Alexander is propelled into the sky by the birds he is confronted by a supernatural being that admonishes him for attempting to explore/conquer the heavens and compels Alexander to turn back.⁷⁸⁸ The flight however should not be viewed as a failed endeavour. For it achieves its aim and fulfils its purpose. Alexander confirms that the limits have been reached and at the same time extends his campaigning skywards. His ascent thus provides a vertical expansion to complement the horizontal one. Alexander is seen to have campaigned from sunrise to sunset, and up to the heavens. Naturally one is reminded of Tiglath-pileser III's claim to exercise dominion from East to West, and to the heights of heaven, but it is Gilgamesh's journey along the Path of the Sun that provides the Mesopotamian model for this conceptual range/arc of campaigning and dominion (see above). Alexander's ascent allows him to claim, like his Mesopotamian predecessors, all of the space under the sun's arc.⁷⁸⁹

Therefore, Alexander's conquest of his *oikumene* was presented in his tradition as a universal campaign and this extent provided our protagonist with solar parity. It is true that Alexander's solar association is nowhere near as sophisticated or elegant as Gilgamesh's, but it is no less apparent. Both kings were presented as having campaigned as far as the sun's reach. In fact, both are also specifically stated to

⁷⁸⁸ *L-text* and *gamma*, ii.41.8-13 (van Thiel 1974:120-121; Stoneman 2012:286-289). Note that in the *L-text* it is more clearly a confirmation of the limits and exploration of the sky, whilst in *gamma* it is more overtly an attempt to conquer the heavens.

⁷⁸⁹ Note that this is an explanation of the ideology. The Mesopotamian model of Alexander's winged ascent (i.e. Etana) has been previously elucidated by Millet (1923:118-119). Also, the story of Ahiqar (and the related ascent of Aesop) and the attempt to colonise the sky should obviously not be excluded from the analysis of Alexander's ascent (cf. Millet 1923:112-118; Stoneman 1992:106-110; 2008:117-119). However, these narratives are complementary and shouldn't be utilised to exclude the Mesopotamian parallels. Ahiqar was supposedly an attendant of the Neo-Assyrian king and Aesop has become advisor to a mythical Babylonian monarch. Thus a Mesopotamian context is maintained and these narratives cannot securely be understood as independent Egyptian and Greek alternatives to a Mesopotamian tradition behind Alexander's flight (Millet 1923:112-119; Anderson 2013:85; *contra* Stoneman). See Wilcke 1989:563; Henkelman 2006; and Frayne 2010:168-178 for arguments for a flight of Gilgamesh; cf. Aelian, *NA*, xii.21 and the gold beaker from Hasanlu (Porada 1959; 1965:96-103; Winter 1989; Lambert 2010:103-104).

have campaigned as far as the ocean and the rising sun.⁷⁹⁰ As has been explained above, conceptually this represented an unsurpassable range of conquest, but it also directly associated the monarch with the sun (and so the sun god). This was the ideological position that the hegemonic Mesopotamian king occupied within his *oikumene*.⁷⁹¹ It is also the position that Alexander ascended to upon succeeding Darius.

Diodorus' narrative clearly articulates this ideological point for the tradition through Alexander's rejection of an offer of terms by Darius. The relevant lines have regrettably been overshadowed by Alexander's pithy response to Parmenion, but his retort to Darius is far more significant for his kingship. Alexander refuses Darius' offer of peace by stating that the *oikumene* can no more suffer two great kings than the *κόσμος* 'universe' (more keenly, 'world') could contain two suns.⁷⁹² This is why *gamma* claims that the Persians wished to honour Alexander as the sun god, Mithras, after his death.⁷⁹³ It is a wish that is consistent with his ideological ascension to hegemonic king. Thus that which has been inferred for Alexander (through the extent of his campaigning) is seen to be overtly confirmed by the tradition. Alexander, like Gilgamesh before him, has ascended to the position of solar monarch through a universal campaign within the *oikumene*.⁷⁹⁴

With Gilgamesh equalled within the 'world', it is left to the world beyond the limits of the *oikumene* for Alexander to push his claim for superlative kingship. This is where he can surpass Gilgamesh. Again the previous section has already introduced how this might be realised (i.e. through a universal campaign of the mythological lands beyond). Alexander will not just push the mortal limits in one direction, but in all directions. He will circumnavigate the outer regions and explore all possible lands within and without the 'world'. Conceptually this achieves the same thing

⁷⁹⁰ Curtius, ix.ii.26; *SB Epic*, i.40 (George 2003:540-541).

⁷⁹¹ Cf. Frahm 2013; Charpin 2013.

⁷⁹² Diod. xvii.54.5; Justin xi.12.15. Cf. Darius' claimed royal parity with the sun god, Mithras (*Syriac*, i.36; Budge 1889:46) and upon meeting for the first time Darius mistaking Alexander for the sun god (*Syriac*, ii.6; Budge 1889:72; van Bladel 2007:63).

⁷⁹³ *Gamma*, iii.34 (Parthe 1969:454).

⁷⁹⁴ Cf. Appendix B for further discussion of Alexander's solar kingship.

outside the 'world' that from sunrise to sunset does within the conceptual 'oikumene'. It is an unsurpassable range of campaigning. The Alexander tradition does not leave this to chance, but makes sure of Alexander's supremacy in the lands beyond by having him turned back at the super-limits by supernatural voices or entities.⁷⁹⁵ Alexander has reached the super-limits beyond the limits, and has caused the gods to intervene. Conceptually he has gone as far as any man can go, and significantly further than any had before him. That which is inferred through the extent of Alexander's campaigning is also overtly articulated by the tradition. In *Gamma* Alexander is seen to reach and surpass the campaign limits of successive archetypal predecessors in the mythologized lands beyond the *oikumene* before the supernatural interventions will halt his advance.

Sesonchosis (the mythologized Egyptian world conqueror) is surpassed first, as Alexander marches past the statue which marked the limit of his campaigns.⁷⁹⁶ The statues of Semiramis (the mythical Assyrian world conqueror) and Herakles are next, presented side-by-side in the narrative.⁷⁹⁷ Alexander continues past these to visit the palace of Semiramis.⁷⁹⁸ The surpassing of each archetypal world-conqueror may be considered separately, as Alexander can be understood to surpass Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek models. However, the joint presentation of the statues of Semiramis and Herakles draws one's attention, and obviously encourages one to consider them together. Are we to understand that each supposedly reached the same point and turned back? Perhaps, but it is possible that Herakles is presented

⁷⁹⁵ *L-text* and *Gamma*, ii.38.2-3; 40.1-2; 41.8-13 (van Thiel 1974:110-111; 116-121; Stoneman 2012:272-273; 280-283; 286-289); cf. Seneca, *Controversiae*, vii.7.19. The claim in Arrian (*Anab.* v.26.2) that the limit of Alexander's empire was that set by the gods for the continent should be added to this too.

⁷⁹⁶ *Gamma*, ii.31.4-9 (Stoneman 2012:214-217); cf. *Epsilon*, 27.2-3 (Trumpf 1974:95-96; Merkelbach 1977:137).

⁷⁹⁷ *Gamma*, ii.34.1 (Stoneman 2012:220-221); cf. *Epsilon*, 29.1-2 (Trumpf 1974:101-102; Merkelbach 1977:137). For Alexander's emulation and surpassing of Herakles in his tradition see, for example, Heckel 2015:25-30. However, note Arrian's (*Anab.* v.3) caution that comparable regional figures may have been supplanted by Herakles in the Alexander tradition.

⁷⁹⁸ *Gamma*, ii.34.2 (Stoneman 2012:220-223). As stated, the reaching of this ancestral palace presents a parallel for the desire to visit the palace of Memnon and Tithonus in Curtius (iv.8.3; cf. Atkinson 1980:364). It is also comparable to reaching the palace of Cyrus in the mythical campaign of the *Third Miracle Letter* (iii.28), as a Persian model is surpassed (Parthe 1969:418-420). Alexander's emulation and surpassing of both Semiramis and Cyrus is also a motif connected with the crossing of the Gedrosian desert in the Alexander narratives (e.g. Arrian, *Anab.* vi.24.2-3).

here in unison with Semiramis as a result of his conflation with other figures (see chapter two). Various options are possible, but it is extremely tempting to tentatively consider that here Herakles represents a reception of Gilgamesh himself. If so, Semiramis would be understood to have gone as far as the Mesopotamian model (as would be expected), and Alexander would be seen here to march past his Mesopotamian rival. It is a tantalising possibility, but alas this cannot be advanced with any real confidence. The emulation of Herakles (as ambiguous as it is) remains much more secure.

Regardless of whichever 'Herakles-figure' is meant, this string of encounters with the great world conquerors of the past presents us with an Alexander who surpassed them all. Whether Gilgamesh is specifically mentioned or not becomes largely irrelevant. Alexander is still understood to have surpassed him along all the others as a result of his universal campaign through the outer regions to the super-limits. Therefore, Alexander is seen to have answered the challenge of the *Epic* and of Sargonic literature. He has gone farther and campaigned as wide as is conceptually possible. Thus we encounter Alexander the Great surpassing all kings. Who is there that can be compared to him in kingly status, and can say like Alexander, 'It is I am the king'? Now this paraphrase is obviously my work, but I take my inspiration from the Alexander tradition. The parallels with and emulation of Gilgamesh are evidently widespread and prominent. *Gamma* summarises this relationship far better than I ever could and much more subtly towards the end of the narrative. As Alexander comes to terms with his death, he is presented lamenting the futility of all this campaigning when it came to his own mortality and fate,

“ὅς τήν ἅπασαν οἰκουμένην διήλθον
ἀοίκητόν τε καὶ σκοτεινώδη γαῖαν,
φυγεῖν οὐκ ἐξίσχυσα τὴν εἰμαρμένην”

“I, who crossed all the inhabited earth,
And the uninhabited places, and places of darkness,
Was unable to evade fate.”

(*Gamma*, iii.33.20-23)⁷⁹⁹

⁷⁹⁹ Parthe 1969:450; Stoneman 1991:156.

This addresses the super-universality of Alexander's campaigning implying his superlative position in this measure, but it also evokes the summary of Gilgamesh's wanderings in the *Epic* (i.40-41; quoted above) connecting the distant advances of the protagonist king with the avoidance of death (or more accurately, the failure to avoid death). Theme and function, even a failed function, are seen to elide between the traditions again.⁸⁰⁰ However, one feels that this passage should also be understood with a degree of subtext: even I, Alexander, who had gone even further than Gilgamesh, was unable to escape death. The king cannot evade death, not matter how far he campaigns. This is a lesson that Alexander is forced to learn just as Gilgamesh had been before him.

6.3.6 Alexander's maturation to kingly knowledge

Conveniently this leads us into the other function of Alexander's wanderings of accession. This is his ascent to kingly knowledge. Fortunately this does not demand a large-scale exposition and can actually be dealt with quite quickly and with relative ease. It can similarly (to Gilgamesh's) be broken down into two parts. The first part is the implicit knowledge acquired through a universal campaign, and the second is the special knowledge inherited during this campaign from an ancestor king. The first of these is simply that Alexander conceptually went everywhere and so acquired an omniscient understanding of the 'world'. This entails knowledge of its extent, its organisation, its limits, its lands beyond the limits, the super-limits, and all that lies in-between. Naturally this is useful knowledge for a king to have and it provides him with a unique perspective. It has been shown above that this was achieved by Alexander, just as it was for Gilgamesh, by traversing all lands.

However, Alexander's unique kingly perspective is also achieved succinctly through his flight.⁸⁰¹ Emulating another Mesopotamian archetypal and founder king, Etana,

⁸⁰⁰ Cf. Henkelman (2010:351) and Meissner (1894:16) who both argue for the significance of this common theme.

⁸⁰¹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.41.

Alexander undertakes a winged ascent into the sky.⁸⁰² The *L-text* overtly states that this was undertaken to confirm that the limits had been reached, and to explore the heavens.⁸⁰³ Thus it is professed as being a flight to knowledge. During his ascent, Alexander, like Etana, is instructed to look down, and like Etana he sees the world somewhat simply and as man conventionally may not.⁸⁰⁴ This vision and unique perspective prepares both archetypal kings for their ascension to the position of hegemonic king providing each with a total perception of the world in short form.⁸⁰⁵ They see the world as the gods may view it from the heavens, thus kingly knowledge comes close to godly knowledge, and the conduit between heaven and earth begins to bridge the gap. Alexander's knowledge of the heavens is dramatically enhanced through his wanderings of accession. This is not simply achieved by hurtling towards them in his flight, but also more elegantly through his comprehension of the path of the sun. As I have demonstrated, this was in emulation of Gilgamesh. Alexander may not travel along the path like his predecessor, but does he acquires knowledge of it, and the heavens more generally, likewise preparing him for his ascension to hegemonic kingship.⁸⁰⁶

But it is not just towards the sky and along the path that he follows, but into the Deep. Alexander, like Gilgamesh, undertakes a submarine exploration during his mythical wanderings.⁸⁰⁷ Gilgamesh's venture below the waves was not undertaken for what it achieved, as knowledge of the Deep was the lasting boon in place of the proposed rejuvenation. Alexander's submarine adventure is also inspired by the desire to source a valuable item from the Deep, albeit a much more materialistic

⁸⁰² Millet 1923:118-119; van Thiel 1974:188; Jouanno 2002:274.

⁸⁰³ *L-text*, ii.41.8-11 (van Thiel 1974:120-121).

⁸⁰⁴ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.41.12 (van Thiel 1974:120-121; Stoneman 2012:286-287); cf. Etana's flight (*SB Etana*, iii/iv; Kinnier Wilson 1985:108-121; Dalley 2000:197-200; Horowitz 2011:45-53; 56-57; 60-65).

⁸⁰⁵ That Etana is ascending to hegemonic kingship is clear from the narrative and tradition (*SB Etana*, i.1-30; Kinnier Wilson 1985:82-85; Dalley 2000:190-191; cf. SKL, i.40-ii.22; Jacobsen 1939:76-81).

⁸⁰⁶ *SyrLeg* (Budge 1889:148-149); cf. *Ethiopic* (Budge 1896:226-228), where this acquisition of knowledge of the heavens is much more explicitly stated, and it is stated that Nimrod (the biblical Mesopotamian archetypal king) had previously acquired comparable knowledge of the heavens. Also see, Nimrod's encounter with the son of Noah, which is clearly modelled on Gilgamesh's encounter with Utanapishti (Budge 1927:143; Henkelman 2010:351-352).

⁸⁰⁷ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.38 (van Thiel 1974:110-113; Stoneman 2012:270-275).

target than Gilgamesh's objective.⁸⁰⁸ Again that which the descent actually achieves is more exploratory as Alexander acquires knowledge of the depths not its targeted riches.⁸⁰⁹ Despite the obvious differences, the basic structure of the submarine expedition is similar, and significantly it functions comparably for our protagonist kings. Both Alexander and Gilgamesh acquire knowledge of the depths to complement their extensive knowledge of the earth and heavens. Alexander is seen to go where his Mesopotamian models had before him and to acquire a unique knowledge of the world and the spaces normally beyond mortal experience during his mythical wanderings of accession. Once acquired, this knowledge confirms Alexander's exceptional status and somewhat becomes his unique possession. Resultantly he becomes the source and transmitter of this special extra knowledge of the world he rules. Thus the *Armenian* presents Alexander setting down all his experiences in the lands beyond the limits on a stone, just as Gilgamesh had purported recorded his own mythical wanderings before him.⁸¹⁰ One may now read of the wonders beyond not just from Gilgamesh, but through Alexander too.

This moves us onto the second part of Alexander's maturation, and this is a little more obscure. One could choose to argue that it appears absent, because it was not required. Gilgamesh had already restored antediluvian knowledge to the world and reinstructed man on the rites owed to the gods.⁸¹¹ There may be no requirement for Alexander to do it again. Whereas in Berossos' narrative the restoration of this knowledge is co-opted for the Chaldean priests, as the companions of Xisouthros retrieve the tablets (of divinely bestowed knowledge) from the city of the sun (Sippar) after the Flood waters had receded.⁸¹² Therefore, the Babylonian priests were the ones who were able to instruct Alexander appropriately in his kingly duties, he need not search out the Flood hero himself. This priestly instruction in the latter example obviously relates to the more practical

⁸⁰⁸ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, ii.38.6-7 (van Thiel 1974:110-113; Stoneman 2012:272-273).

⁸⁰⁹ Jouanno 2002:271; Stoneman 2008:111-114. This exploration of the Deep is greatly enhanced in the later tradition (cf. Ross 1985:382-403; Casari 2012:191-199).

⁸¹⁰ *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:116); cf. *SB Epic*, i.1-10 (George 2003:538-539).

⁸¹¹ Cf. *SB Epic*, i.7-8; 42-44 (George 2003:538-541).

⁸¹² F4a (Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:49-50).

reality,⁸¹³ but it is this royal instruction that is the focus of the matter in both cases. Alexander must learn how to rule in harmony with the gods through his wanderings, just as Gilgamesh did. It was Utanapishti, the king, not just Utanapishti, the Flood hero, who Gilgamesh reached.

Now the inaccessible Utanapishti is clearly not retained in any of the extant Alexander narratives, but there are a host of figures that may serve as him or who could be understood to have supplanted his role in the Alexander tradition. There are two candidates in particular that stand out and warrant further discussion here. The first is *gamma's* placement of an encounter with the Brahmins in the first miracle campaign towards the end of book two.⁸¹⁴ Elsewhere in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* this encounter with the Brahmins is placed in book three.⁸¹⁵ This placement in book three and a more overt Indian location is a more natural environment for the Brahman episode,⁸¹⁶ but it is a mythologized and heavily ideological encounter which cannot be anchored so literally. The assertion by their king, Dandamis, that the Brahmins have the Euphrates to provide them with water whenever they are thirsty clearly demonstrates that *gamma* was not the only version of the encounter to play with their location.⁸¹⁷ There was obviously a version of the episode which had a Mesopotamian attachment.

In *gamma's* version of the encounter Alexander comes to a beautiful, marshy place, which bore all kinds of fruits. This fructiferous locale was situated next to the sea. Across the sea there was an island which Alexander wished to visit. His friend, Philo,

⁸¹³ For example, see the instruction of Antiochus (I) in cultic activity by a Babylonian (Glassner 2004:no.32; 248-251), and the instruction of Alexander in his duties by the Chaldeans when he enters Babylon (Arrian, *Anab.* iii.16.5).

⁸¹⁴ *Gamma*, ii.35a (Stoneman 2012:224-269); cf. *Epsilon*, 30-31 (Trumpf 1974:104-112; Merkelbach 1977:137).

⁸¹⁵ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.5-6 (Kroll 1958:104-106; Bergson 1965:143-148; van Thiel 1974:128-133; Merkelbach 1977:140-141); cf. *Armenian*, 222-223 (Wolohojian 1969:121-123); *Syriac*, iii.5-6 (Budge 1889:92-94).

⁸¹⁶ Cf. Stoneman 2008:91-93.

⁸¹⁷ *Beta*; *L-text*, iii.6.11 (Bergson 1965:147; van Thiel 1974:130-131).

requests to investigate first,⁸¹⁸ and when it is proven safe Alexander crosses and encounters the Brahmans.⁸¹⁹ Conspicuously, Alexander leaves the rest of the army under the command of Antiochus, indicating a Seleucid bias and further implying the Mesopotamian contextualisation.⁸²⁰ Upon arriving on the island, Alexander is confronted by the Brahmans and told that his normal martial approach will not serve him here, and that a more discursive tact is required.⁸²¹ After the conventional questioning of the Brahmans is completed, Alexander inquires about their king and is taken to Dandamis.⁸²² Alexander is then instructed at length by the wise Dandamis upon his actions as king, the futility of his exhaustive campaigning, and his relationship to the gods.⁸²³

All of the basic component parts of Gilgamesh's journey to and encounter with Utanapishti are there: the forest/fruitful space;⁸²⁴ the approach to the sea-shore;⁸²⁵ the crossing of waters to an island in the midst of the sea;⁸²⁶ the sudden switch from a martial to discursive approach upon arriving on the island and meeting its inhabitants;⁸²⁷ and the instructive dialogue with a wise king on how to rule, and man's relationship with the gods.⁸²⁸ There are clear differences, but these are in the superficial details. It is undeniable that the parallel encounters function in the same way for their protagonists and engage with the same themes. As Stoneman summarised, 'the Brahman episode expresses the central paradox of his [Alexander's] career: his unlimited conquest face to face with his inevitable

⁸¹⁸ Note the parallel here with Pheidon and Alexander's desire to cross to an island which hosted the grave of an ancient king in *A-text*, iii.17.3-7 (Kroll 1958:106-107; Gunderson 1980:79; Stoneman 1991:182).

⁸¹⁹ *Gamma*, ii.35-35a (Stoneman 1991:178-179; 2012:224-269).

⁸²⁰ *Gamma*, ii.35.8 (Stoneman 2012:224-225); cf. *Epsilon*, 30.3 (Trumpf 1974:106).

⁸²¹ *Gamma*, ii.35a.1-2 (Stoneman 2012:224-227).

⁸²² *Gamma*, ii.35a.11a (Stoneman 2012:232-235); cf. Stoneman 2008:93-97.

⁸²³ *Gamma*, ii.35a.13-40; also see *gamma*, ii.35a.1-11 (Stoneman 2012:224-233; 236-269); Cf. Stoneman 2008:100-102.

⁸²⁴ Cf. *SB Epic*, ix.171-196 (George 2003:672-675).

⁸²⁵ Cf. *SB Epic*, x.1-14 (George 2003:678-679).

⁸²⁶ Cf. *SB Epic*, x.72-206 (George 2003:682-691).

⁸²⁷ Cf. *SB Epic*, xi.1-6 (George 2003:702-703). Note that here Gilgamesh expresses surprise that Utanapishti is just like him in appearance. This conspicuously appears to be mirrored in *gamma* (ii.35a.1; Stoneman 2012:224-225) with the assertion that Alexander saw that the Brahmans were just like him, only naked.

⁸²⁸ Cf. *SB Epic*, xi.7-246; also see *SB Epic*, x.266-322 (George 2003:694-699; 702-719).

death.⁸²⁹ This could just as easily be describing Gilgamesh's encounter with Utanapishti. Thus we see that the placement of the Brahman episode in *gamma* is not haphazard, but instead has purpose and meaning, providing Alexander with the maturation that he ideologically required. Therefore, a very Graeco-Indian encounter is redeployed in the Alexander tradition to supplant the role of Gilgamesh's interaction with Utanapishti. The locating of the Brahmans near the Euphrates in the other *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives only serves to amplify this underlying Mesopotamian appropriation and contextualisation.

Finally, an alternative or perhaps more accurately variant 'Utanapishti episode' for Alexander is to be found nearly entirely in book three of *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. This is Alexander's venture to the Dwelling of the Gods.⁸³⁰ This episode is attached the Queen Candace episode in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives.⁸³¹ Already this is a promising location. I have already highlighted that Candace is located in the palace of Semiramis in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* naturally connecting it to Alexander's arrival at Semiramis' palace in *gamma*, ii.34, whilst Candace herself is a somewhat credible, general candidate for an Utanapishti surrogate. One could easily see how the visit to Queen Candace could be moulded around the Utanapishti narrative framework just as the Brahmans episode has been seen to have been. The Egyptian context of a visit to Queen Candace of Meroe has already been somewhat blurred in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives by her placement in the palace of a mythical and archetypal Assyrian queen.⁸³² A Mesopotamian contextualisation of the episode is once again detectable.⁸³³

This hybridism of the Candace episode is evident throughout. When Alexander first wishes to visit Candace in disguise, it is Ptolemy who assumes the throne in his place. This indicates an 'Egyptian' and Ptolemaic hand behind the scene. However,

⁸²⁹ Stoneman 2008:138.

⁸³⁰ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.21; 24.

⁸³¹ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.18-23.

⁸³² For the relocation of Queen Candace in *Pseudo-Callisthenes* to the country and palace of Semiramis, see iii.17.11-18 (e.g. *L-text*; van Thiel 1974:136-137); cf. *Syriac*, iii.8 (Budge 1889:118-119).

⁸³³ For an Egyptian contextualisation of Alexander's visit to the Dwelling of the Gods, see Merkelbach 1977:215-218; Stoneman 1992:101-103.

in the same scene Alexander disguises himself as (or assumes the identity of) either Antigonos or Antiochos depending on which version you read.⁸³⁴ This equally implies a 'Babylonian/Mesopotamian' and Antigoniid/Seleucid hand. The episode not only achieves something for Alexander, it is clearly a battle ground for the Successors. Ptolemy is chosen by Alexander to sit of the throne in his absence singling him out as Alexander's chosen successor. This is not to be unexpected in an episode detailing a visit to the Queen of Meroe. However, Antigonos and Antiochos are comparably elevated. In these scenes they are Alexander and Alexander is them. Therefore, while Ptolemy takes the top chair, Antigonos and Antiochos assume Alexander's person and undertake this journey with him step-by-step. They conceptually see what he sees and achieve what he achieves. This proves pertinent, because it is where Alexander reaches and what he experiences that is relevant for the Mesopotamian context.

In *A-text*, *beta*, and the *L-text* Alexander passes through the Dwelling of the Gods en route to Queen Candace, and then returns after having left Candace.⁸³⁵ In *gamma* the full episode is narrated upon first arriving in the Dwelling of the Gods.⁸³⁶ The *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives describe Alexander passing through a land of spectacular crystal-bearing mountains that reach up to the heavens arriving in a forested area laden with marvellous fruits. The spectacular nature of the trees and their enormous fruit is most conspicuously stressed for the purposes of the current analysis when the apples are said to have gleamed like gold. Alexander (Antigonos/Antiochos) is informed that this place is known as the Dwelling of the Gods.⁸³⁷ This clearly represents a direct parallel with the trees of the gods beyond Mount Māšu and the Path of the Sun in Tablet IX of the *Epic*.⁸³⁸ It should then come

⁸³⁴ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.19. For Alexander as Antigonos see: *A-text* (Kroll 1958:116-117), *beta* (Bergson 1965:154-157), and *L-text* (van Thiel 1974:136-139); cf. *Armenian*, 230-231 (Wolohojian 1969:133-134); *Syriac*, iii.9 (Budge 1889:120-121). For Alexander as Antiochos see *gamma* (Parthe 1969:352-358).

⁸³⁵ *A-text*, *beta*, and *L-text* iii.21; 24 (Kroll 1958:118-119; 123-124; Bergson 1965:159-160; 166-167; van Thiel 1974:140-143; 146-149); cf. *Armenian*, 235; 247-249 (Wolohojian 1969:135-136; 140-141); *Syriac*, iii.11; 14 (Budge 1889:122; 126-127). Note that the *A-text*, iii.24 is fragmentary.

⁸³⁶ *Gamma*, iii.21 (Parthe 1969:366-374).

⁸³⁷ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.21 (Kroll 1958:119; Bergson 1965:159-160; Parthe 1969:366; van Thiel 1974:142-143); cf. *Armenian*, 235 (Wolohojian 1969:135-136); *Syriac*, iii.11 (Budge 1889:122).

⁸³⁸ *SB Epic*, ix.171-196 (George 2003:672-675).

as no surprise that this is where another 'Utanispishti-esque' encounter will surface for Alexander.

In the Dwelling of the Gods Alexander sees a host of anonymous phantoms.⁸³⁹ In the *Armenian* these phantoms are silently serving the gods who are present in manifest form.⁸⁴⁰ Alexander then notices some reclining figures with lights flashing from their eyes. One of these identifies himself to Alexander as Sesonchosis, the world conqueror,⁸⁴¹ or alternatively as, Ochus (i.e. Artaxerxes III), the world conqueror.⁸⁴² The *Armenian* adds here that Sesonchosis (and presumably the other kings) has joined the ranks of the gods.⁸⁴³ Both kings (in their respective versions) then go on to state that they are not as fortunate as Alexander, because they do not have an immortal name. They claim that Alexander will achieve this particular kind of immortality because of his city of Alexandria in Egypt.⁸⁴⁴ Alexander asks his royal host how much longer he will live for and is refused an answer. Upon which he departs from the Dwelling of the Gods.⁸⁴⁵ He is then met by his satraps, crowned king, and presented with royal clothing.⁸⁴⁶

The parallels with Gilgamesh's journey to and encounter with Utanapishti are obvious and manifold. I have already indicated the topographical parallels of the spectacular mountains reaching the heavens and the marvellous forest of the gods. To this we can add an ancestor king who has achieved a form of immortality (Sesonchosis/Ochus). This naturally presents a parallel with the figure of

⁸³⁹ E.g. *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.24.1 (Bergson 1965:166-167; van Thiel 1974:148-149); *gamma*, iii.21 (Parthe 1969:370).

⁸⁴⁰ *Armenian*, 247 (Wolohojian 1969:140).

⁸⁴¹ E.g. *A-text* and *L-text*, iii.24 (Kroll 1958:123; van Thiel 1974:148-149); cf. *Armenian*, 247 (Wolohojian 1969:140); *Syriac*, iii.14 (Budge 1889:126-127).

⁸⁴² E.g. *beta*, iii.24 and *gamma*, iii.21 (Bergson 1965:167; Parthe 1969:370).

⁸⁴³ *Armenian*, 247 (Wolohojian 1969:140); also *Syriac*, iii.14 (Budge 1889:126-127); the *Armenian* (235; 247-249; Wolohojian 1969:135-136; 140-141) and the *Syriac* (iii.14; Budge 1889:126) also place this encounter in a cave within the Dwelling of the Gods. Cf. Stoneman (2008:223) for the development in the later tradition of this cave into a cell for kings who exhibited hubris in life by claiming to be gods.

⁸⁴⁴ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.24.2 (Bergson 1965:167; van Thiel 1974:148-149) cf. *Armenian*, 247 (Wolohojian 1969:140); *Syriac*, iii.14 (Budge 1889:127).

⁸⁴⁵ E.g. *L-text*, iii.24.3-4 (van Thiel 1974:148-149); cf. *Armenian*, 249 (Wolohojian 1969:140-141); *Syriac*, iii.14 (Budge 1889:127).

⁸⁴⁶ *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.25.1 (Kroll 1958:124; Bergson 1965:168; van Thiel 1974:148-149); cf. *Armenian*, 250 (Wolohojian 1969:141); *Syriac*, iii.15 (Budge 1889:127).

Utanapishti in the *Epic*. The futility of universal campaigning in relation to one's immortality is addressed somewhat paradoxically. These ancestor kings have achieved a kind of immortality having joined the ranks of the gods, but they lament that they did not acquire the immortal name that Alexander will enjoy. This provides a startling parallel with the *Epic*, as Alexander is seen to achieve the same sort of immortality that Gilgamesh did. Alexandria and Uruk respectively will ensure that these kings live long in the memory.⁸⁴⁷ Alexander then, like Gilgamesh, addresses concerns about his own death, and he, like Gilgamesh is left unsatisfied with his consolation.⁸⁴⁸

The only thing remaining is Alexander's royal instruction. This is achieved in the scene in a way more similar from the Etana tradition. This is because it is the observance of the divine court and the enthroned gods that demonstrate the divine model for the earthly king, Alexander (but also simply through the encounter with ancestor kings who have found favour with the gods).⁸⁴⁹ Thus Alexander's visit to the Dwelling of the Gods is also seen to function in a comparable way to Gilgamesh's encounter with Utanapishti in the *Epic*. Alexander like his Mesopotamian predecessor completes his mythical wanderings of accession, fully matures to kingly knowledge, and returns to rule with his consolation. Alexander is now the king that he set out to become as his metamorphosis completes. This maturation is formally recognised by his satraps as they advance to welcome their new king and dress him in his regalia. Just as Utanapishti enrobed Gilgamesh at the end of his wanderings of accession, Alexander dons the costume for his new role, king of the 'world'.

⁸⁴⁷ *SB Epic*, i.11-23; xi.321-328 (George 2003:538-539; 724-725); cf. George (2003:526) who argues for a related, but more sophisticated interpretation of the closing of the eleven-tablet *Epic*. It is not just the eternal renown attached to the city, but the life and civilisation within its walls that are Gilgamesh's legacy.

⁸⁴⁸ Cf. *SB Epic*, xi.242-246 (George 2003:718-719).

⁸⁴⁹ *Armenian*, 247-248 (Wolohojian 1969:140); *Syriac*, iii.14 (Budge 1889:126-127); for Etana's experience of the divine kingdoms in his dreams and his 'second' flight, which likewise provides him with the divinely harmonious model for earthly kingship, see *SB Etana*, iii/iv (Kinnier Wilson 1985:108-113; 120-123; Dalley 2000:199-200; Horowitz 2011:50-55; 58-60).

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

All that remains is to pull together the threads of our discussion together and to see how far we have come. So let us start with Gilgamesh, as has been the practice thus far. In chapter three a consistent case for an ideological campaign against the Cedar Mountain was presented demonstrating that the episode conceptualised the transfer of hegemonic kingship. This was shown to be true of the episode in the Neo-Sumerian period making the ideology part of the episode from when it is first apparent to us. Huwawa, the king, has made the gradual transition from Alster's recognition of a reception scene similar to that of a king in a foreign court, through Michalowski's satirized Elamite ruler, to a wider understanding that there is something very human and very royal about Huwawa in the Sumerian poems.⁸⁵⁰ This has now been cemented in scholarship with certain clarifications. Although a Huwawa figure may represent a foreign ruler, it is the specifically the transfer of hegemony that is at stake. This means that one may find a Mesopotamian Huwawa just as readily as an Elamite one. Enmebaragesi serves to demonstrate this and clarify the scene. In addition to this, Fleming and Milstein's, and Graff's recognition of a distinctly different guardian, more monstrous in the *Epic*, and more human in the Sumerian poems is shown to be inaccurate.⁸⁵¹ There certainly are differences, but the obscurity lies in the misinterpretation of metaphor. Both the Huwawa of the Sumerian poems and the Huwawa/Humbaba of the *Epic* represent the awesome power of the hegemonic king, whose divine support manifests in a formidable array of terrors to the enemy. No longer can Humbaba be considered as simply a beast, he is the King on the Mountain.

The Neo-Assyrian period engagements with the tradition prove this beyond doubt. It is in the First Millennium BCE that we see a clear engagement with conceptualisations of Humbaba's royal centre on the Cedar Mountain, and an attempt to transfer that Mountain to Mesopotamian royal cities. This is all made

⁸⁵⁰ Alster 1992a; Michalowski 2003; Taylor 2010; Fleming & Milstein 2010:56-59; Graff 2012:78.

⁸⁵¹ Fleming & Milstein 2010:56-59; Graff 2012:78.

possible by the apparent Sargonic microcosm (Beqaa Valley) persistent in the tradition. All of the Great King's territory lies between and within the Cedar Mountains, and so the liminal abode of the gods and the guardian king was conceptually able to shift with the rule. These activities centred on creating a palace to surpass all others are complemented by the detected Humbaba campaign against the Elamite king, Te-Umman. One can hardly look at the 'Garden Banquet Scene' at the British Museum again without thinking of the *Epic*. Yet Assurbanipal's 'Humbaban' campaign is significant for much more than that. It enlightens our study of the *Epic* in this period, clearly demonstrating its continuing importance. Further, the conceptualisation of genuine royal action in this way paves the road for the comparison with Alexander. However, equally as significant is the interpolation of the *Epic* during this period due to this Ulai River campaign. This demonstrates that we are still dealing with a live narrative in the standardized text.

This being realised for the Neo-Assyrian kings, it was then possible to detect a comparable conceptualisation of 'Humbaban' campaign in the Neo-Babylonian period for Nebuchadnezzar II. It is tempting to connect this with what follows in chapter four, and see Nebuchadnezzar as the model for Alexander's 'Humbaban' campaign against Tyre. However, there are problems with such a conclusion. All we have is a glimpse of Nebuchadnezzar's campaign, nowhere near the complexity required to give it primacy as a source for Alexander's version. In addition to this, there are distinct differences apparent even from the snapshot that survives. Nebuchadnezzar's 'Humbaba' is the king of Tyre, whereas Alexander's is Darius III. This might seem to be a small difference, but ideologically it is a chasm. Nebuchadnezzar's campaign is more clearly a campaign against the Cedar Mountain, whereas Alexander conquest of 'Humbaba' achieves hegemony at the expense of the previous guardian. The *Armenian* leaves us in no doubt of this when Darius dies, as Alexander, in a startling parallel with the Humbaba campaign in Gilgamesh tradition, is said to enter a cedar grove and set up his name and deeds.⁸⁵² With Darius dead, Alexander's Humbaba is slain and the episode complete

⁸⁵² *Armenian*, 209 (Wolohojian 1969:112); cf. *DG*, M 53-55 (Gadotti 2014:104-105); *GH A*, 1-7 (Fleming & Milstein 2010:183); *OB III*, 184-188 (George 2003:202-203).

far beyond the walls of Tyre. Alexander then conceptually heads back into the Cedar Forest to complete the aims of the campaign, set up his name, and secure Darius' position as the deposed guardian.

What Nebuchadnezzar's iteration does demonstrate though is the real-time conceptualisation of royal action in line with the *Epic*. Ezekiel is undoubtedly exposed to this ideological propaganda orally and aurally, providing an indication of how Alexander's tradition may have been infected. However it was achieved, the conceptualisation of Alexander's siege of Tyre as a 'Humbaban' campaign presents us with an Alexander in the 'histories' and *Pseudo-Callisthenes* fully contextualised in Mesopotamian kingship ideology. It is just one of many contexts at play in the narratives, but the persistence and pervasiveness of the 'Humbaban' episode should make us re-evaluate the position and value of these sources in the study of the fourth-century king. Curtius, for example, can now be argued to tell us more about Alexander's Mesopotamian kingship than the surviving cuneiform sources. Such a revelation should prevent the marginalisation of these narratives when it comes to the eastern picture. The approach should be inclusive, not exclusive.

Through chapter five, the structural parallel argued for by Henkelman between the deaths of prominent characters and the mythical wanderings in our subject traditions has been fully expounded.⁸⁵³ Thus the death of the king becomes apparent in each tradition. This is a much bigger shift for the Gilgamesh tradition with a new understanding for the liminality of Enkidu realised. It also re-contextualises Gilgamesh's grief and his journey to Utanapishti dealt with in the following chapter. These combined episodes are now understood to engage with the succession of kingship in Mesopotamia, and the metamorphosis of the successor. New light has been shed on Gilgamesh's journey, especially through the Path of the Sun, whilst his overt enrobing at the culmination of both his Humbaba and Utanapishti episodes connect them to each other, and both to the elevation of kingship.

⁸⁵³ Henkelman 2010:350-351.

Although the death of the king is hardly a startling revelation for the Alexander tradition, its comparable relationship with the death of Enkidu in the *Epic* is significant. The long argued-for parallels between the wanderings in each tradition are now fully secured in a Mesopotamian context and the associated ideology. The mapping of Alexander's mythical journey is now possible and much clearer once the Mesopotamian stencils were applied. Yet the biggest boon from the final two chapters for the study of Alexander is the detection of a Seleucid source behind the *First Miracle Letter* in *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. The placement of both a tablet detailing Gilgamesh's wanderings and a narrative depicting Alexander comparatively in the same time and space of the co-regency makes a direct relationship, and direct emulation, difficult to argue against. The complexity of the parallels retained in the Syriac narratives only serves to amplify this reality.

The expounding of Alexander's mythical wanderings also approached a 'real world' context for the abstract campaign. The pressing of frontiers and the conceptualisation of the limits elucidated how a journey into the lands beyond might be ideologically applied to more sober campaigning. Yet with the ideology of succession understood further possibilities may be posited to be picked up by subsequent studies. Upon taking Persepolis, Alexander takes a small force on a campaign that is without doubt a parallel of the wonder campaigns in the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives.⁸⁵⁴ Alexander and his troops cross desolate places, regions with perpetual snow, and pathless places, all heavily implying that others haven't come this way. The wearied soldiers are said to have believed that they were looking upon the end of the habitable world and to have demanded to turn back before the light (so sun) and sky should fail them.⁸⁵⁵ These are motifs that should be very familiar to the reader by now. They then cross a pathless forest and finally find signs of life. They first encounter wild men who are slowly civilised upon contact

⁸⁵⁴ Curtius, v.6.11-20.

⁸⁵⁵ Curtius, v.6.12-13; cf. *Armenian*, 224 (Wolohojian 1969:128) for extreme snow and the absence of the sun for five days during the campaign of the *Second Miracle Letter* (*A-text*, iii.17). Stoneman (1991:184) has restored this part of the *A-text* using the *Armenian*.

with prisoners.⁸⁵⁶ They advance further devastating the fields of Persia, and come to the race of the Mardi. These are a warlike people who hide in mountain caves and whose females are described as hairy and martial. Having defeated these too, Alexander and his troops return to Persepolis on the thirtieth day after having set out.⁸⁵⁷

The ideology that they were outstripping the sun and reaching the end of the world is combined with slightly rationalised descriptions of wild peoples, cave-dwellings, and hairy women. It is a campaign to nowhere, with the interior of Persia supposedly its target. Alexander's small force clearly embarks on a mythical wonder campaign at this point. That it occurs in the middle of the empire seems odd at first, but its placement after the taking of Persepolis resolves the difficulty. In the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* (ii.20) narratives, Darius dies in his palace at Persepolis. Thus the wonder campaign beyond the limits in Curtius is most securely understood as an echo of the structural relationship between the death of the king and the wanderings of succession. In Curtius this relationship is not apparent, but when considered alongside the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives, the specific engagement with the ideology is restored.

Further the Mardi represent a geographically ambiguous people seemingly designating nomadic tribes at the northern limits and within Persia itself.⁸⁵⁸ This makes them ideologically useful, just as we saw for Alexander's ambiguous Arab campaign in chapter four. One is then left to consider whether the campaign in Curtius is a complete fiction or whether a minor expedition was conceptually embarked upon when the king died in a 'real world' context. It is surely not coincidental that Curtius launches into a criticism immediately after this Mardi campaign with the phrasing, *omnes reges antecessit* 'he surpassed all kings'.⁸⁵⁹ Regardless of its pejorative deployment the placement of such sentiment is more

⁸⁵⁶ Curtius, v.6.15-16.

⁸⁵⁷ Curtius, v.6.17-20.

⁸⁵⁸ For the Mardi, see Gregoratti 2014.

⁸⁵⁹ QCR 5.7.1.

than conspicuous, and telling of a very real and detectable engagement with the *Epic* within the Alexander tradition.⁸⁶⁰

Therefore, surely Meissner's assertion is to be considered realised in scholarship now, and the relationship between the Alexander tradition and the Gilgamesh tradition secured.⁸⁶¹ The complexity and breadth of the parallels, alongside the circumstances for transmission, make the argument unassailable and this conclusion irrefutable. In realising this, the current thesis was somewhat unavoidably pitched against Stoneman's rejections of the Mesopotamian parallels and influence.⁸⁶² Such a position can no longer be maintained. It is now clear that the comparison should be rendered in relation to a common engagement with Mesopotamia kingship ideology, providing a connection that is both secure and rooted in evidence.

Yet the discoveries made by this study do not diminish or supplant other contexts. The immense value of Stoneman's elucidation of the Egyptian context complements what I have shown, as do both complement Spencer's study of the Roman context.⁸⁶³ One must always be wary of the Alexander trap and avoid championing one contextualisation over another. I will not make this mistake. The Alexander of the narrative tradition or the subject episodes is not uniquely or solely a Mesopotamian king. What I have outlined is simply a Mesopotamian contextualisation present within a tradition that underwent entextualisation.

⁸⁶⁰ Other examples of a symbolic campaign beyond the limits at the death of the king may be detected in Nebuchadnezzar's journey across the desert back to Babylon on the death of his father, Nabopolassar in Berossos' narrative (Berossos, F9a; Verbrugghe & Wickersham 1996:57-59), and Artaxerxes II coronation in Plutarch (*Arta.* iii.1-2). In the former we have a potential symbolic advance across the desert mimicking the crossing of wilderness territory to arrive back in Babylon to be crowned king. In the latter, the ritual disrobing, the donning of a costume imitating the way Cyrus dressed before he was king, and taking a meagre meal. One can infer that a ceremonial enrobing would have followed as the new king assumed his position. This may be indicative of a ritual playing out of the abstract campaign, as the king symbolically dressed as the wild wanderer before returning to his kingly apparel having completed his conceptual campaign. As stated, these are just preliminary ideas here, and they require further study and larger space to be fully realised. However, even through this cursory treatment one can see the possibilities and how each king may play Gilgamesh without going any near as far as the ends of the earth.

⁸⁶¹ Meissner 1894:11-12; 18.

⁸⁶² Stoneman 1992; 2008:152-154.

⁸⁶³ Stoneman 1992; Spencer 2002.

Through the events of Alexander's life and campaigning, and the subsequent pervasiveness of his tradition, he migrated from a Macedonian monarch to much more than a Greek or Roman possession. He belongs to the world, the world that he conquered, and the wider world that he was professed to have conquered. 'Alexanderland' is a diverse and complex environs, where scholars must tread carefully. All that I have done is shown a glimpse of his Mesopotamian face.

Appendix A

Figures

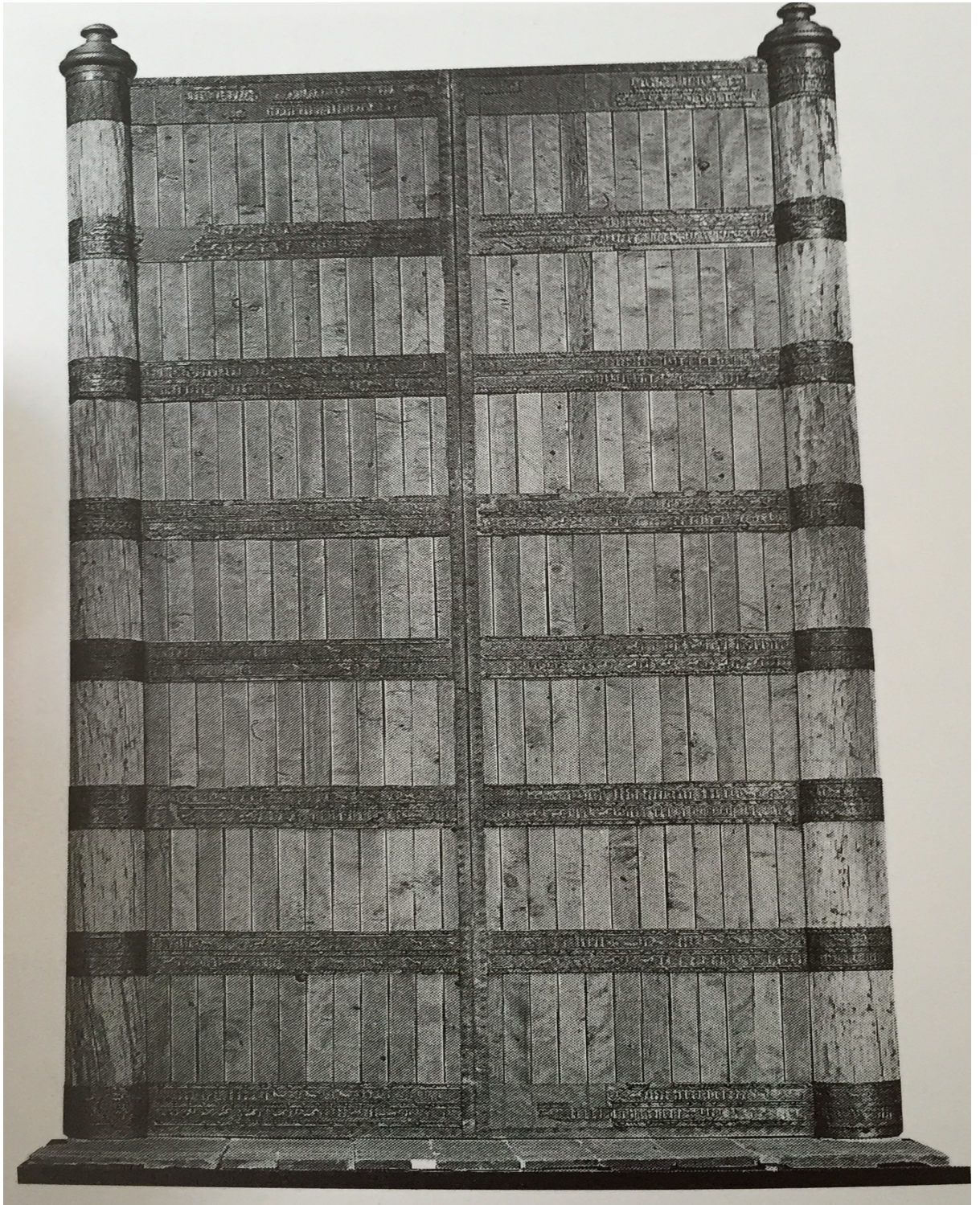


Fig.1.1 – Reconstruction of the palace gates of Shalmaneser III from Imgur-Enlil (Balawat). British Museum (Reade 1998:32).

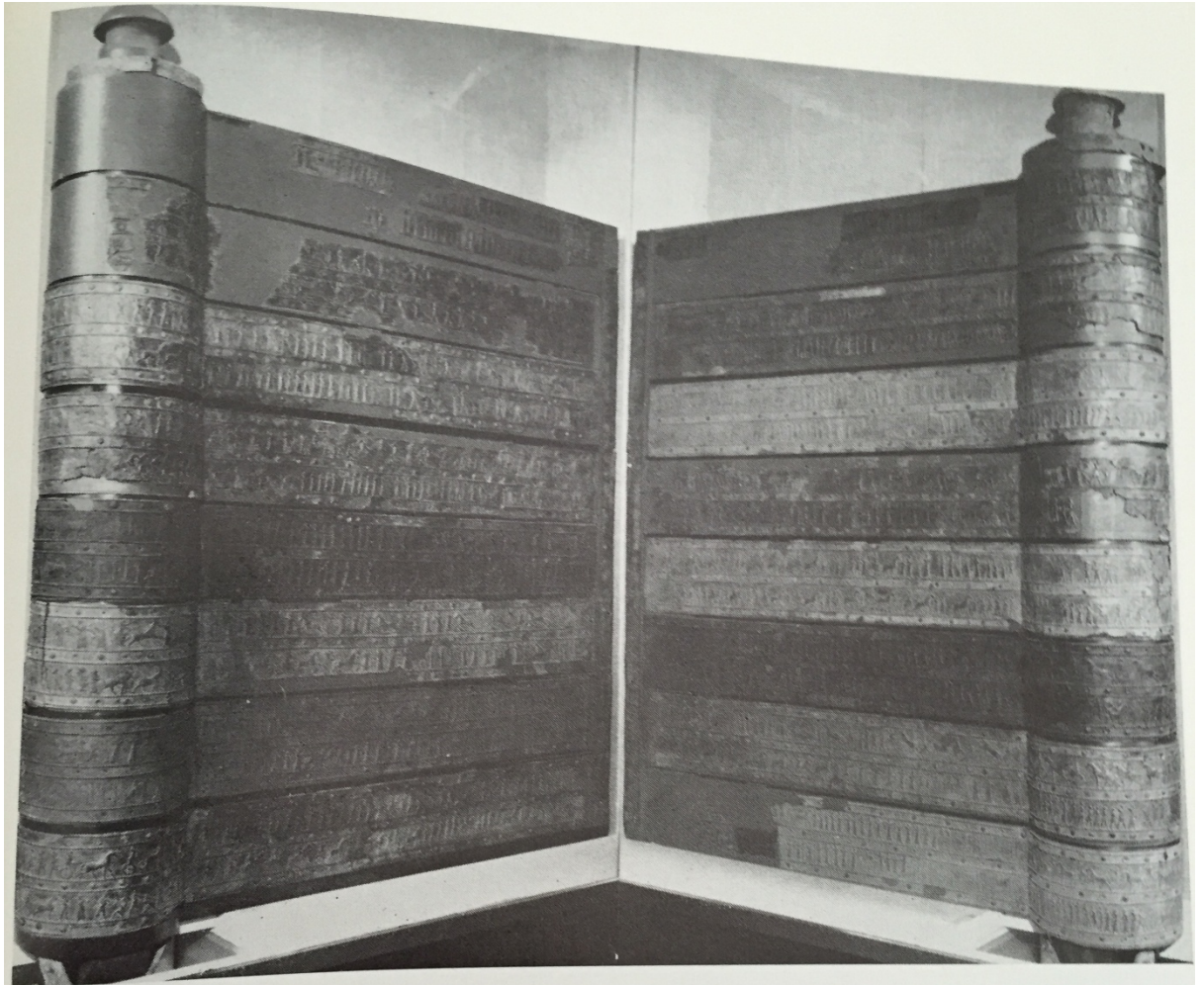


Fig.1.2 – The Bronze plates from the palace gates of Shalmaneser III at Imgur-Enlil. British Museum (Barnett 1976:pl.III).



Fig.1.3 - Submission of war captives before Shalmaneser III. Balawat Gates, band X. British Museum. (Cifarelli 1998:218)

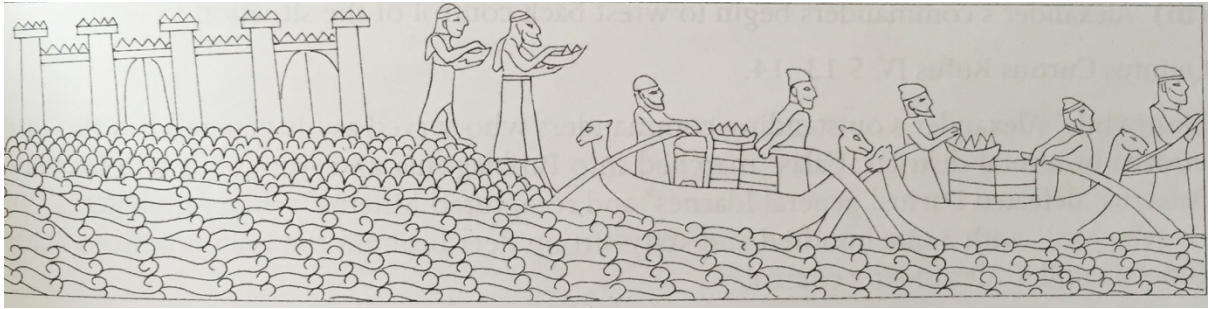


Fig.1.4 – This is a drawing of a scene on the bronze plating on the palace gates of Shalmaneser III at Imgur-Enlil. It represents the sending tribute by Tyre to the Neo-Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III. Balawat. British Museum (Kuhrt 2007:441).



Fig.2 - Submission of war captives before Sennacherib at Lachish. SW Palace, Nineveh. British Museum. (Barnett 1976:pl.iv)



Fig.3 – An audience with the Persian king. Apadana, North Facade, Persepolis. National Museum Iran (<http://www.livius.org/a/1/iran/proskynesis.jpg>).

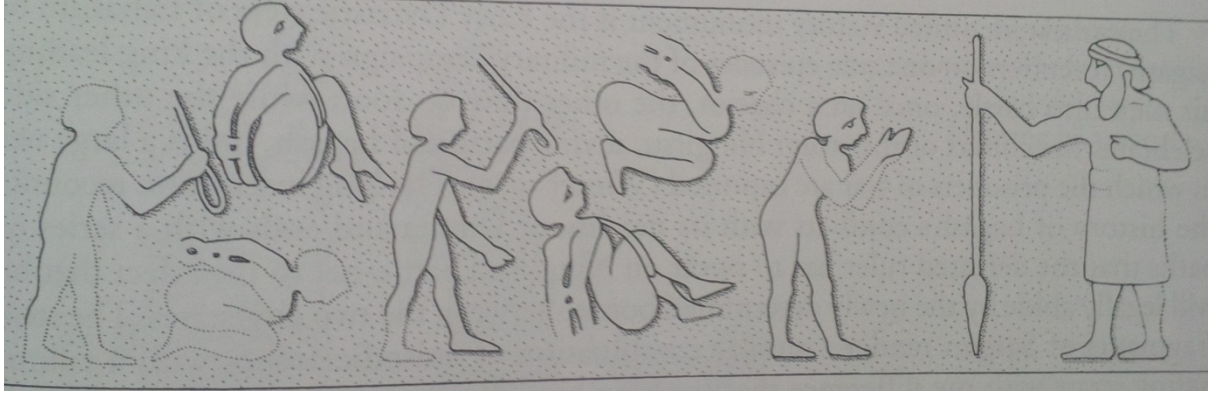


Fig.4 – Late Uruk period seal depicting war captives before a ruler (Suter 2013:213).



Fig. 5 – Victory stele of Naram-Sin, king of Akkad's commemorating his campaign against the Lullubi. Old Akkadian period. Sb4, Louvre, Paris. (Bienkowski & Millard 2000:206-207).



Fig. 6 – Stele of Hammurabi, king of Babylon's detailing his law codex. Old Babylonian period. Sb 8, Louvre, Paris. (Price 1904:471).

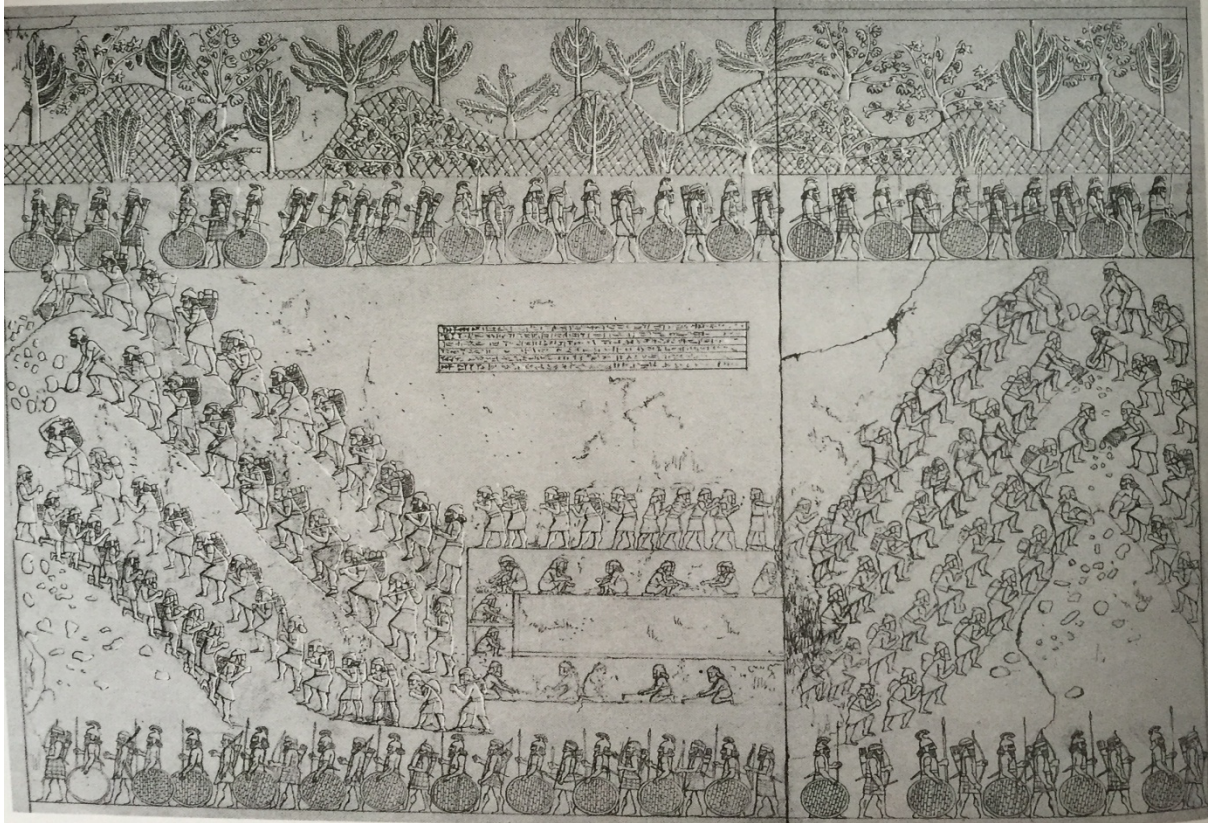


Fig. 7 – A quarry-scene depicting activities concerning Sennacherib's 'unrivalled palace' at Nineveh (SW Palace, Nineveh; Reade 1998:26).



Fig.8 – The 'garden scene' or 'banquet scene' from Assurbanipal's palace (North Palace), Nineveh. British Museum (Reade 1998:88).

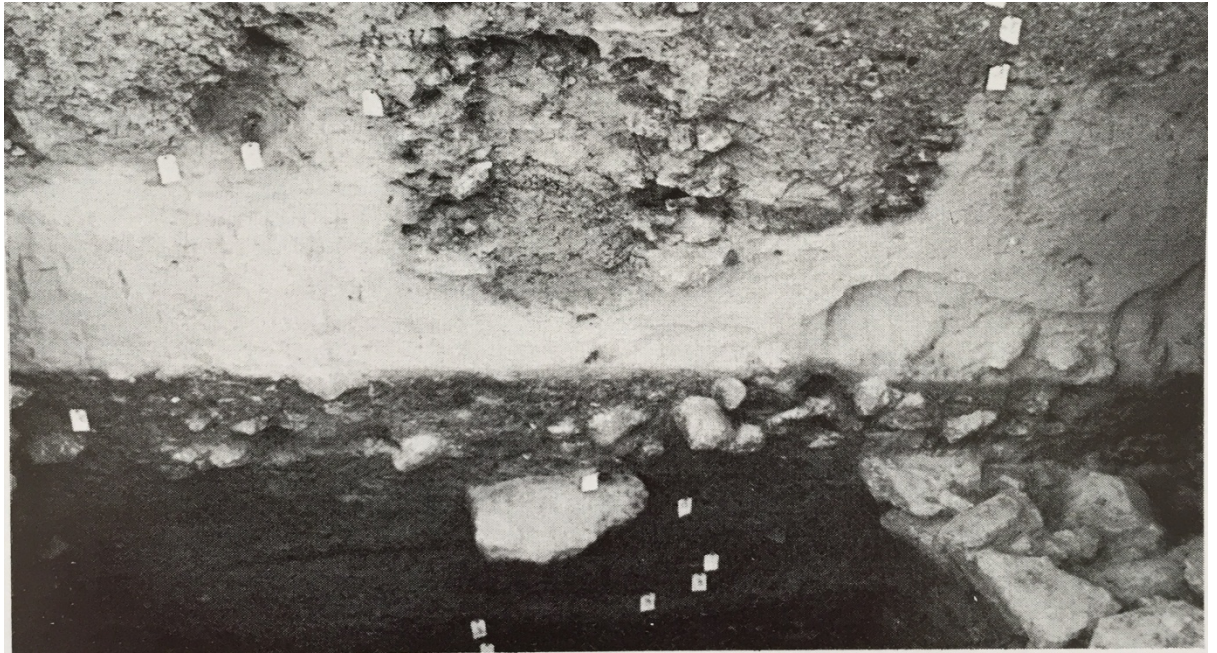


Fig.9 – Sand layer between the Early and Late Bronze Age layers on the island of Tyre (Bikai & Bikai 1987:93).

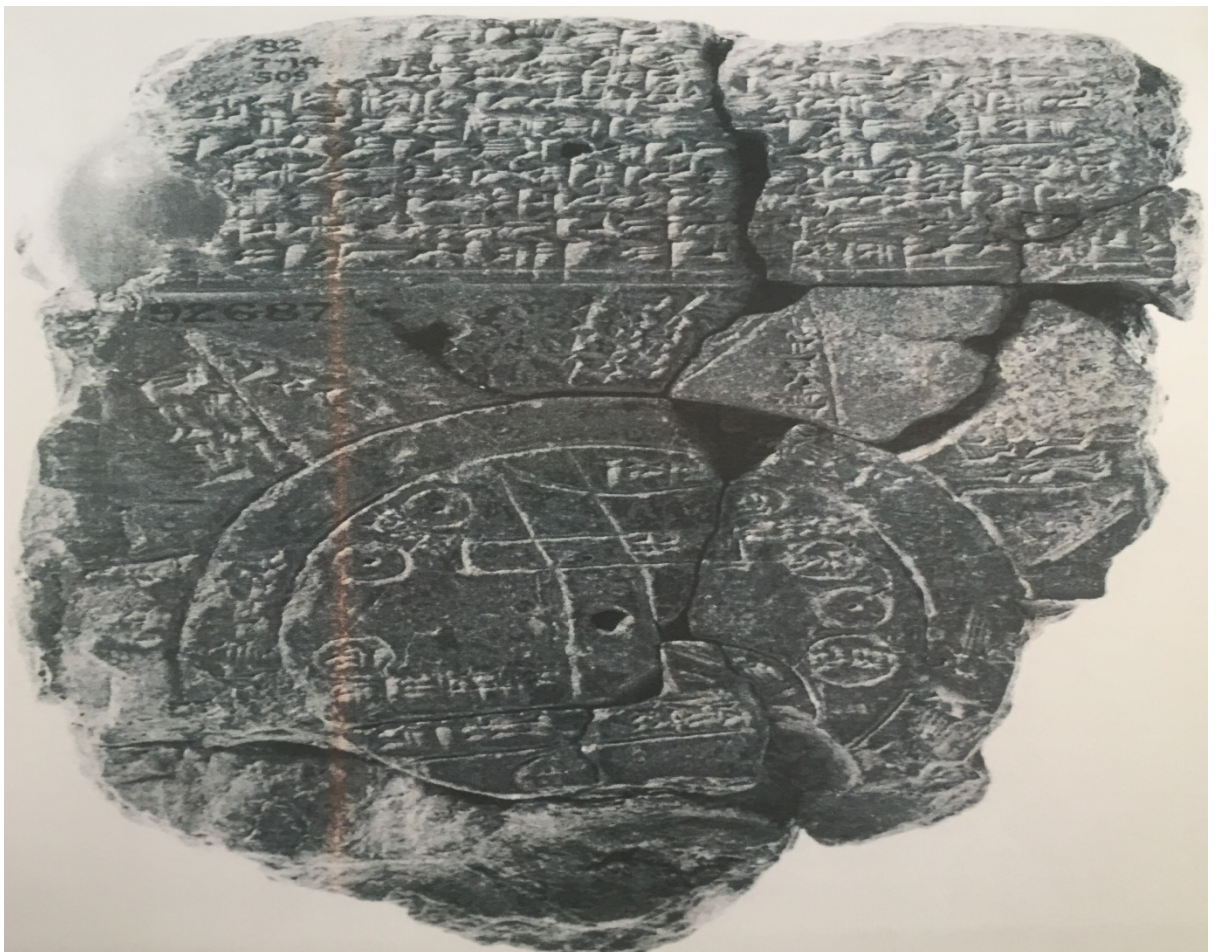


Fig.10.1 – The Babylonian Map of the World, BM 92687 (Delano Smith 1996:210).

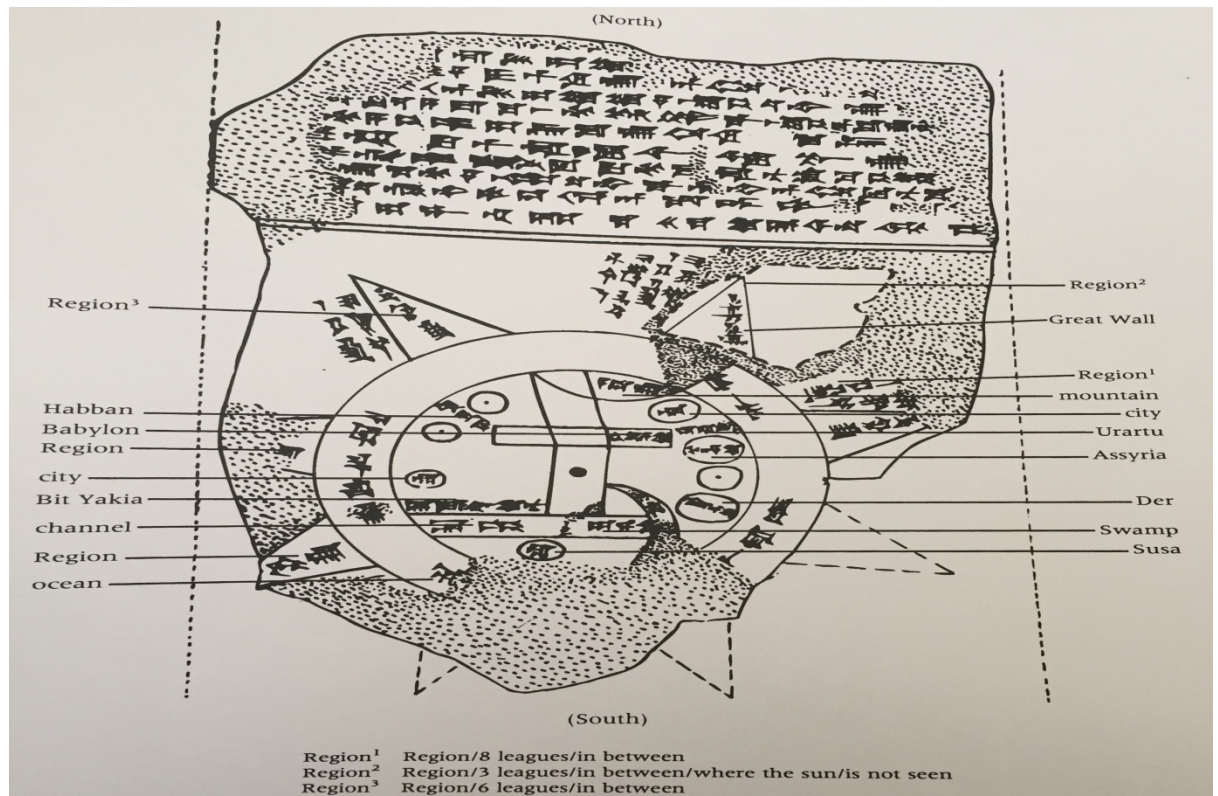


Fig.10.2 – Drawing of the Babylonian Map of the World with cuneiform captions and translations (Delano Smith 1996:211).

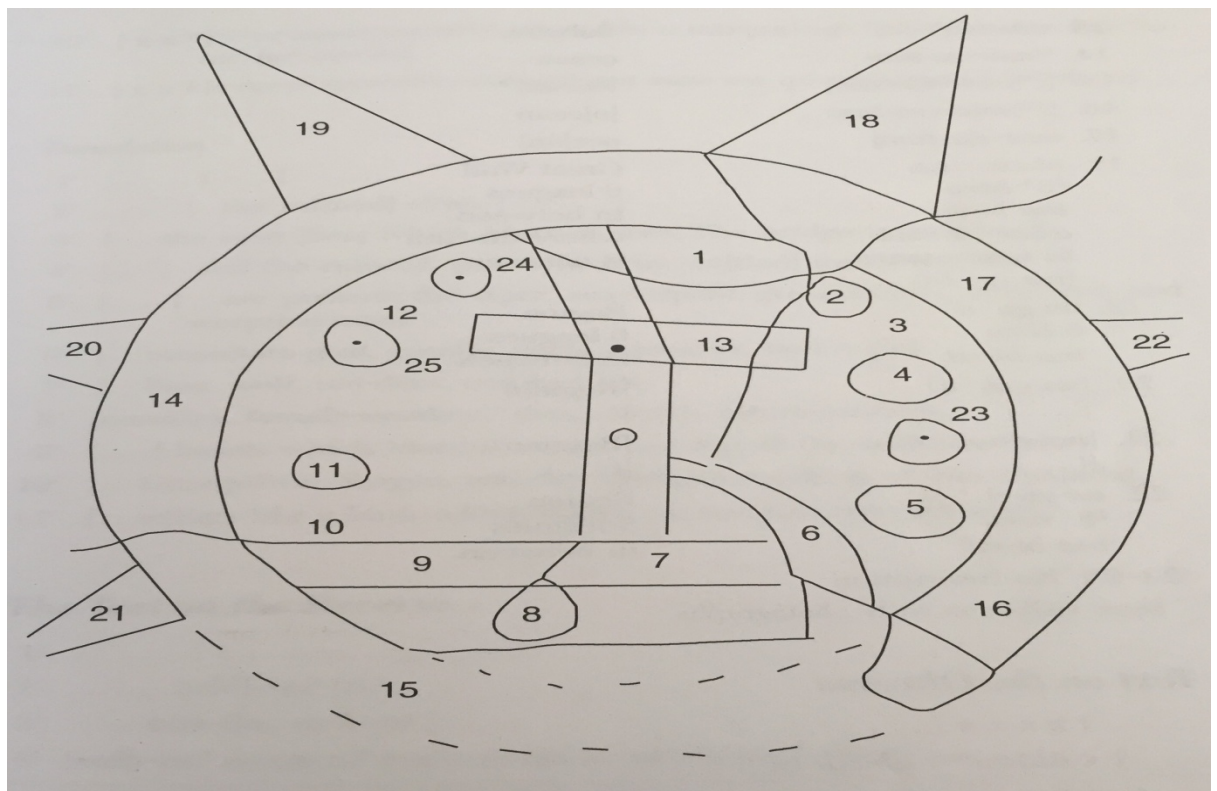


Fig.10.3 – Drawing of the Babylonian Map of the World with marked places numbered for discussion (Horowitz 2011:21).

Appendix B

The institutionalised narrative structure for the death of the Mesopotamian monarch continued: the deaths of Alexander and Cyrus

The continued engagement with this narrative structure and its perseverance in the literary accounts detailing the 'natural' death of the Mesopotamian monarch can be demonstrated by applying it to the narrative tradition of the other subject king of this study. Compare the Mesopotamian examples discussed above with the 'natural' death of Alexander within his narrative tradition and the continuity appears clear.⁸⁶⁴ It seems logical that a Mesopotamian institutionalised narrative structure for the 'natural' death of the king would have infected the narration of Alexander's own death simply due to its location in Babylon. This logical conclusion is further supported by the already identified example of the narration of Mesopotamian kingship ritual (Substitute King Ritual) in the sources.⁸⁶⁵ It is my contention that the study of the impact of the Mesopotamian contextualisation upon the narration of Alexander's final days and death needs to be greatly expanded upon in scholarship.⁸⁶⁶ However, I will limit myself to a few quick points that will serve to demonstrate the utility of such a re-interpretation: Alexander likewise suffers a comparable protracted illness; he is likewise presented as laid out in state; and there are the celestial, and specifically solar, associations made with the king at his point of death in Babylon.

⁸⁶⁴ Due to the nature of the comparison, it is the narration of Alexander's protracted illness and death that is of immediate concern and not any tradition about him being poisoned. This does not mean that it cannot be applied to a king who is slowly expiring from poisoning. For more general studies of Alexander's death and analysis of the tradition of him being poisoned, see Bosworth 1971; Heckel 1988; 2007; Lane Fox 2004.

⁸⁶⁵ Smelik 1978/79.

⁸⁶⁶ So far: see Samuel's (1965) attempt to argue for the influence of Babylonian documents upon the *Ephemerides*; and Smelik's (1978/79) identification of the Substitute King Ritual in the Alexander narratives. Van der Spek (2003) is also relevant here, as he discusses Alexander's engagement with Babylonian traditions. Although his study focuses primarily upon the Babylonian documents mentioning Alexander, and not their impact upon the wider narrative tradition, it is still instructive.

The most detailed accounts of this illness and death are those provided by Arrian and Plutarch, who both claim the *Ephemerides* as their source.⁸⁶⁷ The exact nature of this source is hotly debated with theories ranging from its identification as a genuine court document to it being a complete fabrication composed at a later date.⁸⁶⁸ Whichever position in the debate one adopts, you are left with the undeniable conclusion that the *Ephemerides* at least purports to relay an 'official' account of Alexander's final days, and would very likely contain details from contemporary narrations of events.⁸⁶⁹ This conclusion does not of course relate to any assessment of the source's veracity, but simply serves to establish that the account in the *Ephemerides* may transmit relevant narrative details concerning the contextualisation of Alexander's death in Babylon. This appears to be the case, as it is stated that the *Ephemerides* provides us with a detailed account of a debilitating illness that stretches over a specific number of days finally resulting in the king's death. Plutarch claims that for the most part his account repeats the *Ephemerides* verbatim.⁸⁷⁰ This is obviously not something that we can definitely verify, but either way it does not preclude the impact of other comparable narratives. Note that Plutarch refers to Aristobulus' account of Alexander's final illness immediately before his account of the *Ephemerides*.⁸⁷¹

Likewise with Arrian, in his account of the *Ephemerides* he concludes with a comparative statement regarding Aristobulus' and Ptolemy's narratives, οὐ πόρρω δὲ τούτων οὔτε Ἀριστοβούλῳ οὔτε Πτολεμαίῳ ἀναγέγραπται 'Aristobulus and Ptolemy have recorded no more than this' (alt. not far from it').⁸⁷² It is not clear

⁸⁶⁷ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.25-26; Plut. *Alex.* 76.

⁸⁶⁸ Anson (1996) provides a useful summary of the theories concerning this source. For examples of the debate: Robinson (1932:63-73) argued that the *Ephemerides* were genuine journals kept of Alexander's expedition; Pearson (1955:432-439) argued for a late date and fabrication akin to his interpretation of the Romance letters; Samuel (1965) argued that the *Ephemerides* were based on contemporary Babylonian documents, such as astronomical diaries and chronicles; Bosworth (1971:119-122; 1988b:158-184) argued for a near contemporary publication to dispel rumours of poisoning; and Hammond (1988; 1991) argued for a long established Macedonian royal custom of keeping diaries.

⁸⁶⁹ Even Pearson (1955:439) argued that the fabricated diaries would have been based on contemporary accounts, such as Ptolemy and Aristobulus.

⁸⁷⁰ Plut. *Alex.* 77.1.

⁸⁷¹ Plut. *Alex.* 75.4.

⁸⁷² Arrian, *Anab.* vii.26.3; Hammond 1983:170-171.

whether this statement refers to an account of *Ephemerides* by Aristobulus and Ptolemy or whether it simply informs us that these authors ended their narratives at the point of Alexander's death.⁸⁷³ As Arrian directly goes on to provide Alexander's famous last words and state that others had claimed that Alexander was poisoned, it appears that at the very least Aristobulus and Ptolemy narrated Alexander's death comparably to the account in the *Ephemerides*.⁸⁷⁴

Plutarch provides us with specific dates for Alexander's illness in his account of the *Ephemerides*. He starts his account by stating that Alexander was sick with fever on 18th Daisios and he concludes by stating that the king died towards the evening on 28th Daisios.⁸⁷⁵ This would appear to amount to an eleven-day illness with Alexander dying on the eleventh day. In Arrian's account, it is possible to identify at least nine definite days of illness, largely through the repetition of ὅστερ' αἶμα 'the following day'.⁸⁷⁶ However, it is clear from the narrative that Alexander is not dead at the end of the chapter, and that one should add a day or two to the beginning of my reckoning before the narrative device of ὅστερ' αἶμα is employed.⁸⁷⁷ Bosworth has argued for a twelve-day illness in Arrian's account of the *Ephemerides* and this appears to be accurate. As Plutarch's account appears to narrate an eleven-day illness, Bosworth concluded that the difference between the two accounts (which extend beyond the apparent difference in the number of days) could be best explained by understanding Arrian's account as a conflation of the *Ephemerides* and Aristobulus' account of Alexander's final days.⁸⁷⁸

A further scar may be detected in Arrian's narrative to support this conclusion. Towards the end of Arrian's account of the *Ephemerides*, he expresses the passing

⁸⁷³ Cf. Pearson 1955:437-438; Bosworth 1980:23-24; 1988b:159-162; Hammond 1983:4; 170-171.

⁸⁷⁴ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.27. Note that Bosworth (1980:23-24) argues that Arrian sourced his account of the *Ephemerides* through the narratives of Ptolemy and/or Aristobulus; cf. Bosworth (1988b:158-167) for an argument for a conflated account in Arrian's narrative of two distinct narratives (*Ephemerides* and Aristobulus) of Alexander's illness.

⁸⁷⁵ Plut. *Alex.* 76.

⁸⁷⁶ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.25.2-6.

⁸⁷⁷ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.25.1.

⁸⁷⁸ Bosworth 1988b:158-167.

days of Alexander's illness in a sequence of night to day.⁸⁷⁹ Arrian appears to be employing the same progression of days at the beginning of his account.⁸⁸⁰ Yet it is not clear whether this progression of days remains consistent throughout Arrian's entire account of Alexander's illness. This is because Arrian moves from a whole night spent in fever to a statement regarding the next day.⁸⁸¹ This may be indicative of the impact of two sources that Bosworth argued for upon Arrian's narrative. The apparent shift between two different progressions of days exhibits a potential narrative stitch in Arrian's account, and may explain how Arrian imports an additional day of illness into his account.

Plutarch tells us that Aristobulus dated the king's death to 30th Daisios.⁸⁸² This may have also had an impact on the length of Alexander's illness in Arrian's account. Bosworth understood this as a round number selected by a vague and inaccurate Aristobulus.⁸⁸³ However, it may actually be understood to refer to the same day as Plutarch provides for the *Ephemerides*. If Daisios was a hollow month, following its Babylonian counterpart at this time, then 30th Daisios would have directly followed 28th Daisios.⁸⁸⁴ Plutarch's exact wording at the point of Alexander's death then becomes pertinent. He tells us that the *Ephemerides* stated that, *τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ φθίνοντος πρὸς δείλην ἀπέθανε* 'And on the twenty-eighth, towards/around evening, he died.'⁸⁸⁵ If this statement by Plutarch is deemed to allow for the placement Alexander's death up to the point of sunset, an interpretation that I favour, then by Mesopotamian reckoning it could have been dated to the next day.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁷⁹ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.25.6.

⁸⁸⁰ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.25.1-3.

⁸⁸¹ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.3-4.

⁸⁸² Plut. *Alex.* 75.4.

⁸⁸³ Bosworth 1988b:167.

⁸⁸⁴ Depuydt 1997:126-128.

⁸⁸⁵ Plut. *Alex.* 76.4. For *τῇ δὲ τρίτῃ φθίνοντος*, 'on the third of the waning (moon)' representing 28th Daisios, see Depuydt 1997:128.

⁸⁸⁶ Cf. Ps.-Plato, *Definitiones*, 411b; Grzybek 1990:32. Also, see Depuydt (1997:125-126) who alternatively argues for a translation of 'afternoon'. Depuydt's determination to argue for an afternoon period is predicated by a desire to align the *Ephemerides* statement with the astronomical diary. The astronomical diary clearly places Alexander's death during the daytime on 29th Ajjaru (11th June 323 BCE; BM 45962, obv. 8; Sachs & Hunger 1988:206-207; 218; Depuydt 1997:121-124). Cf. *δείλην* (Liddell & Scott 1861:277).

This is because Mesopotamian days were measured from sunset to sunset. This is something that is demonstrated by the structuring of the astronomical diaries which begin each day's observations at sunset and continue into the following daytime.⁸⁸⁷ Thus, when dying in Babylon, if the king was deemed to have died after the sun had set, it would have occurred on the following day. It is entirely plausible that Aristobulus was following a progression of days from sunset to sunset at this point in his narrative. This would explain the confusing nature of Arrian's account. From Plutarch's account of the *Ephemerides*, this particular progression of days is not impossible, but also not as apparent. Thus, the placement of Alexander's death at sunset would allow one author to record a date of 28th Daisios and another to record 30th Daisios. The apparent discord can be resolved by arguing for the employment of differing measurements of the day. Therefore, both sources in Plutarch can be seen to agree in time and date (i.e. the evening of 10th June 323 BCE).⁸⁸⁸

This then provides us with an identifiable twelve-day illness in both extant narratives, whilst allowing for agreement between Aristobulus' narrative and the *Ephemerides*. Based on the current material this then presents us with a comparable illness, over a comparable twelve-day period, with the evident First Millennium BCE example of the institutionalised narrative structure, Enkidu. Yet one must exercise caution here. Firstly, we cannot be sure of the exact length of Enkidu's illness due to the *Epic's* currently fragmentary state at this point. Secondly, calculating the length of Alexander's illness second-hand in the sources is

⁸⁸⁷ Sachs & Hunger 1988:15; Depuydt 1997:124; cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* ii.79, which states that the Athenians likewise measured days from sunset to sunset. It should be noted that Pliny incorrectly states that the Babylonians measured the day between sunrises and so he must be followed with caution. However, Pliny is more likely to be accurate concerning such things within the Roman Empire and experience rather than without.

⁸⁸⁸ Attempts have even been made to argue that the evening of *Φαρμοῦθι τετράδι* '4th Pharmouthi', provided by the *A-text* (iii.35-9-10; Kroll 1958:146) and the *Armenian* (286; Wolohojian 1969:159) as the date of Alexander's death, to agree with the other sources. This is achieved by arguing that an 'α' in a manuscript of the lost alpha recension was mistakenly read as a 'δ' corrupting these recensions and thus shifting the date by three days from 1st Pharmouthi (10th June) to the 4th (Lewis 1969:272; Grzybek 1990:33-34; cf. Depuydt 1997:130ff). This should be considered with caution, as although possible, it is completely hypothetical. Cf. Justin (xii.16.1), who simply states that it occurred in June.

precarious. We are left to conclude that Alexander is presented within his narrative tradition dying of a protracted illness over a number of days. It is possible to discern twelve days of illness comparable to Enkidu, but this is complicated and unsecure. With the inconclusive nature of our sources for all three figures (Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and Alexander) protracted illnesses, it is perhaps better to not be so rigid concerning their individual lengths at this time. The parallel in general terms may be enough without requiring the exact specifics to align. Alexander suffers the 'natural' death that the Mesopotamian monarch is expected to undergo, just as we have seen in the examples of Gilgamesh and Enkidu.

Just like our other Mesopotamian models, Alexander's illness also eventually incapacitates him. He is rendered speechless and is thought to dead by the Macedonians.⁸⁸⁹ At this point of apparent death, we are presented with the scene of the soldiers demanding to see Alexander, and the resultant procession of the army passed their laid-out king. Both Arrian and Plutarch specifically state that this procession of the soldiers was narrated in the *Ephemerides*.⁸⁹⁰ It is conspicuous how this scene parallels the laying out of the king on the bed of honour in Mesopotamian tradition. Despite some narratives claiming that Alexander showed signs of life during the procession of the soldiers, the scene naturally evokes the king's funeral.⁸⁹¹ In Plutarch's purported verbatim repetition of the narrative in the *Ephemerides* the analogy is even clearer, as no signs of life are mentioned as the soldiers file past.⁸⁹² However, it is Curtius' overt engagement with the analogy that states it most clearly,

Intuentibus lacrimae obortae praebuere speciem iam non regem, sed funus eius visentis exercitus: maeror tamen circumstantium lectum eminebat. Quos ut rex aspexit: 'Invenietis,' inquit, 'cum excessero, dignum talibus viris regem?' Incredibile dictu audituque, in eodem habitu corporis, in quem se composuerat, cum admissurus milites esset, durasse, donec a toto exercitu illud ultimum persalutatus est.

⁸⁸⁹ Plut, *Alex.* 76.3-4.

⁸⁹⁰ Plut. *Alex.* 76.4-77.1; Arrian, *Anab.* vii.26.1.

⁸⁹¹ For examples, see Justin xii.15.2-3; *Armenian Pseudo-Callisthenes*, 270-271 (Wolohojian 1969:152-153).

⁸⁹² Plut. *Alex.* 76.4; cf. *Urnamma A*, 43, where 'the beloved of troops is not able to life his head anymore' (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:108; cf. *Susa version*, 26-27, where 'the proud one who lies in the palace, Urnamma whom the cities [...], was not able to raise himself anymore'; Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:154-155).

'As they gazed at him, their rising tears gave the impression no longer of an army looking upon its king, but of one attending his funeral; yet the grief of those who stood about his couch was still greater. When the king saw them he said: "After I am gone will you find a king worthy of such men?" Incredible to tell and to hear of, he continued to hold his body in the same attitude in which he had composed himself when he was about to admit the soldiers, until he had been saluted by the whole army for that last time.'
(QCR, x.v.1-3)⁸⁹³

Comparably to our Mesopotamian examples, the connection is directly made between the laying-out of the king in his final illness and the laying-out of the king in his funerary rites. The entire scene parallels the 'natural' death of the king just as we have seen in our Mesopotamian examples. We are then left to consider the possibilities concerning this set-piece in the narrative of Alexander's death. It may be that we have the narration of an actual event and that the procession of the army genuinely occurred. If so, it is then possible that we have the recounting of Mesopotamian funerary rites for Alexander. However, one is even left to speculate whether underlying such narrative scenes in the Alexander tradition is the recounting of a ritual attempt to cure Alexander of his illness just as is evident from K 164.⁸⁹⁴ I have argued above that a comparable episode in *Lugalbanda I* should be understood to represent both, just as K 164 does, so it is plausible that the scene in the Alexander narratives was intended to be likewise liminal.

Although I would not reject the possibility that this represents the accounting of a genuine event, I would argue that a more secure conclusion is that Mesopotamian institutionalised narrative structures for the 'natural' death of the king influenced how the story was told in Babylon at the time, and therefore subsequently in the Alexander narratives. The timing, as well as the location, of Alexander's death make the Mesopotamian parallels all the more likely and very difficult to deny. The astronomical diary dates Alexander's death in Babylon to 29th Ajjaru (11th June 323 BCE).⁸⁹⁵ A month later would mark the beginning of the month of Dumuzi and

⁸⁹³ Cf. the soldiers' tears in *Urnamma A*, 64 (Fluckiger-Hawker 1999:112). In *Syriac Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.21 this scene is presented in a conspicuously ceremonial context where the soldiers are said to have marched passed in full armour (Budge 1889:138-139); cf. Plut. Alex. 76.4, where the soldiers are said to file past without cloak or armour.

⁸⁹⁴ Scurlock 1992.

⁸⁹⁵ BM 45962, obv.8 (Sachs & Hunger 1988:206-207; 218).

within less than two months of Alexander's death the festival of Dumuzi would have been enacted across Mesopotamia.⁸⁹⁶ The occurrence of both Alexander's death and the annual festival of Dumuzi within such close proximity make it highly probable that the narration of the king's death would have been infected with the scenery of the well-established festival. It is perhaps then conspicuous that Arrian tells us that Alexander expected to be fully recovered after three days, and that Justin stated that Alexander was resigned to his death after the third day.⁸⁹⁷ The *Ephemerides* apud Plutarch likewise presents a three-day period from when the Macedonians assume Alexander to be dead and he is confirmed dead.⁸⁹⁸ It would appear that the motif of the prescribed three-day period has been maintained as a blind motif within the extant Alexander narratives.

Finally, there are the solar associations made with Alexander at the point of his death. Returning to our understanding Plutarch's narrative, which allows for the locating of Alexander's death at sunset, the *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives provide some conspicuous parallels. The *Armenian* states that Alexander died 'toward nightfall' (alt. 'with sunset').⁸⁹⁹ This is within a comparable framing of birth at sunrise and death at sunset found in a range of other *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives. For example, compare it to the framing in *beta*,

Ἐγεννήθη μὲν ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος μηνὶ Ἰαννουαρίῳ νεομηνίᾳ, ἀνατολῆς οὐσῆς ἡλίου, ἔτελεύτησε δὲ μηνὶ Ἀπριλλίῳ νεομηνίᾳ, δύσεως οὐσῆς ἡλίου.

'Alexander was born in January at the new moon, at the rising of the sun; he died in the month of April at the new moon, at the setting of the sun.'
(*Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.35)⁹⁰⁰

⁸⁹⁶ The annual festival occurred at the end of month of Dumuzi (Scurlock 1992:58-61; *LAS*, no.5 and 6, Parpola 1970:4-5; 1983b:8-10; Sachs & Hunger 1988:218).

⁸⁹⁷ Arrian, *Anab.* vii.25.2-5; Justin xii.15.1.

⁸⁹⁸ Plut. *Alex.* 76.3-5.

⁸⁹⁹ *Armenian*, 286 (Wolohojian 1969:159); cf. Raabe 1896:107.

⁹⁰⁰ *Beta* (Bergson 1965:191); *L-text* (Van Thiel 1974:166-167; Stoneman 1991:159); *Gamma* (Parthe 1969:458). The unexpected placement of Alexander's death in April, instead of June, has been explained as an inaccurate conversion of the Egyptian month, Pharmouthi, attested in the *A-text* (iii.35-9-10; Kroll 1958:146) and *Armenian* (286; Wolohojian 1969:159) narratives. This is via both the Egyptian and later Alexandrian calendars. The Egyptian month Pharmouthi corresponds with June, but the later Alexandrian calendar aligns Pharmouthi with April. So an author confronted with the recognisable Pharmouthi in a narrative converts it incorrectly to April (Depuydt 1997:133-134).

The ambiguity of the Armenian reference and the other *Pseudo-Callisthenes* placements would seem to actually support an understanding of *πρὸς δειλὴν* in the *Ephemerides* (apud Plutarch) as likewise indicating a time in the evening around sunset.⁹⁰¹ The *Pseudo-Callisthenes* narratives clearly intend to place Alexander's death at sunset. It is then plausible, perhaps even likely, that the *Ephemerides* shared this solar analogy. Significantly, these provide Alexander with the solar associations that were expected of the Mesopotamian monarch. Further, the association between the king's death and the daily solar cycle is overt, just as was detected for the Lugalbanda narrative discussed in chapter five, and for the *Epic of Gilgamesh* in chapter six. That we are told that the Persians wished to honour Alexander after his death as the sun god, Mithras, only reinforces this identification for the dying Mesopotamian monarch, Alexander.⁹⁰²

Therefore, even from this cursory treatment, it is clear that the Mesopotamian infection of the narrative around Alexander's death can be seen to extend far beyond an obscure reference to the Substitute King Ritual. Alexander's final illness and death is directly comparable to the Mesopotamian model for the 'natural' death of the king. It is also conspicuously comparable to the death of Enkidu in the *Epic* in its general details, such as the approximate length of the debilitating illnesses, and the laying out of each king on a bed of honour. It is telling that the motif of the three liminal days to determine illness or death perseveres as a functional motif within the Alexander narratives. A case for continuity appears evident. The placement of Alexander's death at sunset within his narrative tradition provides us with a trinity of parallels that present a strong case for a very Mesopotamian death for the dying Macedonian king. As stated at the outset of this analysis of Alexander's final illness, this is to have been expected considering the location of the king in Babylon at this point. However, the parallels are complex and

⁹⁰¹ *Contra* Depuydt (1997:126; 130-134).

⁹⁰² *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.34.1 (Kroll 1958:145; Bergson 1965:189; Parthe 1969:454; van Thiel 1974:164-165; Stoneman 1991:158). Cf. *Pseudo-Callisthenes*, iii.33.5, which presents Alexander's death within an astronomical framework of reverence alongside the solar analogy (cf. Frahm 2013). An eagle and a great star are said to be observed and to descend, as the statue of Zeus in Babylon trembles. Then when both eagle and star have ascended again and disappeared, Alexander is said to fall into his eternal sleep (Kroll 1958:144-145; Bergson 1965:188; Parthe 1969:454; van Thiel 1974:164-165; Stoneman 1991:157).

they should force us to re-evaluate how we approach the study of the Alexander narratives considering time and place more carefully.

Whilst arguing for the continuity of this institutionalised narrative structure, it would be remiss of me not to comment upon its repetition in a narration of the death of Cyrus II, the Teispid king. In Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, Cyrus is presented as dying over a number of days in a comparable manner to Enkidu, Bilgames, and Alexander.⁹⁰³ Baynham has previously noted the parallels between the deaths of Cyrus and Alexander arguing that the former's in Xenophon may have provided the model for the latter's in the *Ephemerides* and Onesicritus' account. She understood Cyrus' death in this manner to have been an invention of Xenophon's, something that my argument contradicts.⁹⁰⁴ Instead of free invention by Xenophon it appears to represent a long established narrative structure in Mesopotamia for the 'natural' death of the king. In spite of the parallels, Xenophon's account of Cyrus' death cannot have been the sole source for Alexander's Mesopotamian death in his narrative tradition, as it lacks the relevant specific details that I have shown above to be pertinent.⁹⁰⁵ It is only sustainable to argue that the death of Cyrus, as told by Xenophon, represents another example of the institutionalised narrative structure for the 'natural' death of the great king of Mesopotamia (albeit it is narrated here as occurring in an extra-Mesopotamian locale).

⁹⁰³ For Cyrus' death in Persia, see Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, viii.7.

⁹⁰⁴ Baynham 2000:246-247; cf. HDT i.214, where we are told there were many different and conflicting narratives of Cyrus' death. For the various narratives concerning the death of Cyrus, see Kuhrt (2007:99-102). Lucian, *Macrobii*, 14, should be added to Kuhrt's collation of sources. Lucian states that Cyrus lived to the age of a hundred (a conspicuous and ideologically loaded age for a king in Mesopotamia), and also has him suffer a 'natural' death (specifically, a broken heart due the actions of his son, Cambyses). Note that Lucian purports that his source was the Persian and Assyrian annals, and he also states that Onesicritus' account seems to agree with them.

⁹⁰⁵ It is interesting that Cyrus likewise appears to be resigned to his death after three days of illness (Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, viii.7.4-5).

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